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# LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

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FEBRUARY 1905.

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## *Hay Fever.*

BY WALTER HERRIES POLLOCK AND GUY C. POLLOCK.

### CHAPTER IV.

MR. TEMPEST, when he found himself in the street, having let himself out of the office by the private door unbeknown to anyone save Pettigood, stopped, drew a long breath, and chuckled softly. Then 'It is lucky,' he said to himself, 'that Pettigood's hat and coat fit me so well, though to be sure the hat is a little exiguous.' As a matter of fact, it looked rather as though it had perched rakishly and by chance on Mr. Tempest's somewhat massive head.

'Pettigood! Aha! Poor Pettigood! At this moment he might be sunning himself, *vice* Henry Tempest gone away'—here he gave a kind of hoarsely whispered view holloa, and chuckled again—'in the smiles of Mrs. Sapley—and a mons'ous fine woman she must have been—but, unluckily for Pettigood, there's Mister the Professor to be reckoned with. Well, after all, reckoning is Pettigood's trade, and he's reckoned pretty good at it, so let 'em fight it out and *vogue la galère!*'

'Do you know,' he continued, still muttering to himself, 'that play on the word *reckon* is rather amusing? It makes me feel inclined to say—*How do you do, Eisenkopf?*' The italicised words were spoken suddenly aloud, and addressed by Mr. Henry Tempest in his best business manner to a City magnate who passed at the moment. The incident gave pause to his wandering fancy, and when he resumed his self-communing it was with his mind's voice only (if a mind's eye, why not a mind's voice?) that he proposed

the question, 'What shall I do next? It must be getting on for luncheon-time. Shall I lunch at one of my clubs? And, if so, which, and why, and why not another, and which of them? Come, come, this won't do; it's pleasant and juvenile—doosid juvenile—but it seems somehow to lack decision and purpose. No, I will not go into clubland, for this is a joke which I really must keep entirely to myself—joke and I and nobody by—so rather let me seek out some humble place of entertainment where I am not likely to be known, and then consider my plans.'

With some little difficulty and peregrination, and always furtively looking about to see that he was not observed, inasmuch that a young policeman, failing (as doubtless a more experienced officer would not have failed) to recognise his highly respectable back and walk, followed him suspiciously until he caught sight of the face of the model stockbroker, Mr. Henry Tempest found a quiet-looking and retiring place of entertainment, which he thought might afford him in peace the modest chop and glass or two of light port from the wood which he proposed to allow himself for luncheon. He entered, and was handed an old-fashioned bill of fare, from which he ordered his old-fashioned repast. While the waiter was away issuing commands, it struck Mr. Tempest that the proprietor's name—Zembbald Perkins—at the head of the bill was a trifle out of the way. This set him off into a dreamy musing, the upshot of which was that his memory carried him from the name Perkins to the ball given by a lady of the same name as described by Mr. Thackeray.

Thus, when the waiter returned with his chop and dwarf decanter of port, the stockbroker, with the look and tones of one indulging himself in a pleasant reverie, said softly: 'So the name is Perkins,' and straightway proceeded to quote, still gently murmuring, 'Well, that rhymes with jerkins, my man of firkins; so don't let us have any more shirkings and lurkings, Mr. Perkins.'

The waiter, surprised for once out of habitual stolidity, stared long (one might almost add 'and loud') at Mr. Tempest. The waiter caught the speaker's eye, and the eye became that of a person suddenly awaked to the consciousness of an amazing action.

'Dear me!' said the stockbroker, turning rather red. 'Dear me, Zemb—I mean John,' he continued, hitting the right or at any rate the by-right of prescription name at his second venture, 'dear me! The memory plays one strange tricks at times. A little entertainment that the children'—'whose children?' he asked himself as the words came halting from his mouth—'are getting

up, a scrap of it which in this moment of relaxation came into my mind ; but I had no idea that I was speaking aloud, as I evidently must have done. Tut, tut ! Pray let me ask you to join me in a glass of this excellent light port, which I am sure is precisely what my doctor would approve for my gouty tendencies.'

The speech, with its old-school politeness and accompanied as it was by its appropriate action, served to dispel, happily, the alarms of the sedate John, and served also to recall Mr. Tempest, for a time, more or less completely to himself. He went through his luncheon, that is, in a mood near akin to that of a person who in the early (or late) morning wakes up just enough to know that he is asleep and to take joy in the knowledge. And here what an opportunity presents itself for a few pages of metaphysical descant upon the various intermediate states between sleeping and waking, and their why and wherefore ! But—and perhaps our readers, if any, may not regret the fact—such digressions are not for us. We have to attend to Mr. Tempest. He, good man, might—who knows ?—have waked up gradually but entirely from his state of dreamy beatitude to a full perception of all that had befallen him. He might then, with the aid of the faithful Pettigood and Sir George Paston, have set straight all the things that had gone crooked. This and other things which did not happen might have come to pass quite naturally but for one of those unforeseen and impish calamities which seemed destined to overtake him.

Just after he had called for his reckoning, and the sedate John had gone to fetch it, Mr. Tempest suddenly felt a tickling in the top of his nose. 'Heavens !' he said to himself, 'this is the herald of another sneeze. No time must be lost. Prevention is better than cure,' and therewith pulling the flask from his pocket, he poured out what he thought a proper dose into his wineglass and had drunk it and restored the flask to his pocket before the waiter returned with his bill.

The immediate effect which the draught had on its recipient was to produce a singular clearness of vision and decision. This he thought, and sternly suppressed a gleam of amusement at the coincidence that the two words rhyme, even while he paid the bill and gave the waiter man a true *largesse*, coupled with another jocular yet altogether dignified reference to the playful pranks of memory.

When he had walked, still with a debonair dignity, into the street, he first reflected, 'Honest John—why do so many of them answer to that name ?—thinks that I am the father or uncle—

it could hardly be grandfather, no!—of a large family of merry children making midsummer holiday. Well, forgive us our sins! But that was a very small one, and helped me out of a small but embarrassing difficulty. Mr. Henry Tempest talking like that to a waiter! To be sure it would never do! Ha, presence of mind is a great matter; and that reminds me.'

At this point he hailed a passing four-wheeler, a vehicle which, chiefly on account of long-leggedness, he had from his youth up preferred to a hansom.

He told the man to go to Waterloo, remembering with perfect correctness that he would just hit off a train which would take him to the station for Sir George Paston's house so that he would have the pleasant part of a summer afternoon and evening to spend as he liked before dinner. His valise he calculated, also correctly, would have been looked after so as to meet him at the station, with or without his man to see him off.

Now, it so happened (and surely there again was evidence that the Imp of the Perverse had joined forces with the Bottle Imp against Mr. Henry Tempest) that the stockbroker's man, using the discretion wisely reposed in him by his master, had, indeed, taken the valise, which was, in fact, a dressing-bag neither new nor old, marked with a red star, to the station, but had there left it in charge of a porter, thinking it best to return himself to the stockbroker's house, there, with the housekeeper, to keep watch and ward in consequence of recent depredations. The porter, having received minute instructions, was on the look-out for Mr. Henry Tempest, and put him into a carriage in company with a dressing-bag, neither new nor old, marked with a red star. Beyond the fact that the pleased young porter got a double tip, nothing came of the discretion of the stockbroker's man until about a quarter of an hour out of London, when the train, having stopped for two minutes at Scrattage, where no one got in, started on what, with the exception of a brief halt for the examination of tickets, was a clear run for a little short of an hour to Three-Mile Hollow, the station for Sir George Paston's place. Then Mr. Tempest, alone with the dressing-bag, feeling again a pleasant sense of youthful exhilaration, bethought himself that the moment had arrived to read an evening paper, with an *obligato* accompaniment of one of his own particular cigarettes.

Wherefore he pressed the spring, opened the bag, and straightway found himself looking at a piece of paper neatly pasted on the dividing compartment and covered with handwriting which was

neither his own nor that of his man. Then, with a natural curiosity, he proceeded and read, with but mild surprise, the following words :

'*Mem.* Make-up for retired Anglo-Indian colonel who has held civil appointment. Fifty-six or fifty-seven; moustache only. Slightly tanned—not yellow—complexion (see powder in packet with moustache); lines round eyes very delicate; dust with special powder (see packet); darken eyebrows; firm but gentle (see crayon in packet); walk dignified but springy.' 'Springy!' said Mr. Tempest to himself, 'I'm the boy for that!' 'Wear coat habitually open. Grey tie, with pearl pin to match, in separate packet.'

'Why,' cried Mr. Tempest again, 'I was made for the part, or the part for me! This *is* a game! It reminds me—how it does remind me of the early days of the A.D.C.! How well I remember it all, and our *facile princeps*—the only begetter, etcetera—a merry soul he was and is, to be sure! Bless my heart, the opportunity is too good to neglect. No trouble about the age, no need for lining. On the contrary, perhaps just the slightest touch of rouge with the tan, for business does make a man look older than he feels. Certainly these pearls—not so bad that, as there is a pearl pin—must not be cast before swine—no, no! To work, Henry! It needed but this to make it a regular Arabian Nights' day—if you will pardon a paradoxical expression,' he added, bowing to nobody, with an odd relapse into his business manner. 'To work!' and suiting the action to the word he opened the packets indicated in the manuscript. 'A very masterpiece of Clarkson's art!' he exclaimed, as, with the aid of some spirit-gum and a hand-glass which lay together in the bag, he assumed the beautifully finished moustache. 'A wig, too! Grey—but I'm well thatched, and shan't want that. Lucky I've kept my hair on. Wonder if George will keep *his* on when he sees me! Ho, ho! But stay—a new brush and comb—ha! part my hair in the middle and brush it back to make a difference—that's it. Boots—"fash'nable but dear," no doubt—so are mine. Always was celebrated for my foot! *Ex pede Tempestatem!* No need for the boots! This really is most enjoyable. Tie and pin! Good! clothes, ha! Trousers—very like my own—needn't change them; besides, it might be awkward if a ticket-inspector came round.'

As if the fear, or let us rather say the prudent apprehension, were father to the fact, at this moment the train, which had been slowing down without Mr. Tempest's perceiving it, stopped, and simultaneously he felt one side of his new moustache loosen itself,

droop, and drop flaccid over his mouth. He heard the ticket-inspector's footfall, he heard the ticket-inspector's demand approaching his compartment. With a swift coolness he clapped his handkerchief to the side of his face which had suffered loss, and assumed the attitude of one racked by violent toothache. In this guise he met the visit of the inspector, who, being a humane man, and perhaps also being impressed by the air of dignity which was inseparable from Mr. Tempest, made sincere apologies, with explanations, for disturbing the supposed sufferer. The reply which he got was so full of gentleness and nobility untouched by adversity that as he went on his way along the footboard he said to himself: 'A very affable, understandable gent that as ever I met; but he does seem to have the toothache cruel bad.' While Mr. Tempest, again left alone, reflected that the mishap and his own readiness of resource in dealing with it afforded a striking illustration of the method adopted by Robinson Crusoe in casting up accounts with good and evil fortune. As soon as the train began to move again he re-fixed the erring moustache with double care, and resumed his attention to a change of costume.

'Coat and waistcoat—a shade more worldly and less Stock Exchangey than my own, so on they go. And now,' he looked at as much of himself as he could see in the hand-glass, 'a veritable transformation I declare!' Then he chuckled, lay back, and offering the incense of a cigarette to his new self, gave himself up for a time to a pleasant maze of memories and forecastings of enjoyment, until, when the cigarette came to an end, he started up, exclaiming: 'Getting near the station now! Must pack my coat and waistcoat in the bag and fasten it up again—so! And then—why then, ha, ha, we'll wait the event, and that's the humour of it!'

Thus it came to pass that when the train stopped at Three-Mile Hollow there stepped down from it, holding a leather dressing-bag with an alert air, a dignified personage no longer in his first youth who was obviously, if anything too obviously, a retired Anglo-Indian official. Him eyeing addressed, with an air of satisfaction at his own penetration, a dapper young servant in livery, with the words: 'Beg pardon, sir; you the gentleman that was expected?'

'To be sure,' rejoined the seeming Anglo-Indian benignly; and then, following the servant, got into a carriage which was in waiting and drove off in a state of boyish exultation and expectation.



## CHAPTER V.

MR. TEMPEST, it will be remembered, when he left his office left also his confidential clerk Edward Pettigood in charge of a chaos (which had come not again but entirely anew into the stockbroker's sanctum) with the parting and cruelly flippant observation that it might amuse Pettigood to see what happened.

Pettigood, it should here be stated, had secretly and for a long time cherished, in his unofficial hours, a devout admiration for the Napoleonic genius, allied with a half-acknowledged conviction that there was in him something more than a touch of this genius, latent but not the less existent. He pictured it to himself as a hidden spring which one day would gush forth into a brilliant forceful stream. He felt, when Mr. Tempest left the office, that this day maybe had come, and that it was for him to rise to so great an occasion. Therefore he did *not* 'smile at' his employer's 'witticism,' but he *did* 'forgive the sarcasm,' and he proved himself in a double sense a man of confidence. 'Duty and destiny,' he murmured to himself as he walked with a dignity befitting the trust reposed in him towards the area of disturbance between Professor and Mrs. Sapley. Neither of these persons had heard the other's violent attempts at recrimination and explanation, and this mattered the less because, in their then state of excitement, neither would have understood had he or she heard a single word. But most naturally when they perceived the advancing Pettigood both by a common impulse turned upon him as if to rend him.

'What,' cried the Professor shrilly, 'is my wife about here?' and, almost as though they were performing a duet in canon, Mrs. Sapley broke in on the ante-penultimate word with, 'What is my husband about to say next?'

Then, instead of glaring as heretofore at each other, both glared at Pettigood, and again, by a common impulse, both voices joined in the words, 'Can you tell me?' and, again in undesigned concert, both paused for a reply.

Pettigood was staunch, but he lacked inspiration at this unforeseen conjuncture, therefore he naturally fell back upon commonplace, which perhaps served his turn better than any stroke of genius could have done. For his simple question, 'Would you mind telling me what is the cause of difference?' found them as unprepared as he himself had been, and, indeed, fell as a douche of cold



sense on the heat of their natural and common attacks. They were astonished into silence. Mrs. Sapley, with feminine quickness, was the first to perceive and use an advantage. 'Professor Sapley,' she said, looking with conscious superiority at her husband, 'asked me to meet him here. He was not here when I arrived. Mr. Tempest kindly received me and engaged me in conversation.' Here she stopped dead short, leaving an opening which a person more quick-witted in ordinary affairs than Professor Sapley might at once have turned to her discomfiture. But, thus suddenly reminded of the appointment between them which he in the excitement had clean forgotten, even as she a little earlier had forgotten it in the turmoil of vanity and bewilderment, Professor Sapley, after a moment's pause, found nothing better to say than :

'To be sure, yes, we did, Arabella Georgina, as you observe, agree to meet here, and for the rest, as to the—ha!—'

'The very trifling matter,' Mrs. Sapley broke in quickly, 'which we were discussing when Mr. —'

'Mr. Pettigood, if you please, madam,' said the confidential clerk demurely.

'To be sure, yes, Mr. Pettigood,' continued the Professor, 'yes—well—we really need not trouble Mr. Pettigood about that.'

'No,' said Mrs. Sapley somewhat incisively; 'it is not a matter which need trouble anyone at any time'; and thus adroitly did she contrive to seal his lips with words practically stolen from them. The Professor felt that whatever he thought he could not well say any more as to the agitating surmises which had assailed him, and, indeed, he completed his own defeat by replying with nervous hurry :

'Quite so. Quite so. And the only question that remains is, where is Mr. Tempest?'

'Yes,' chimed in Mrs. Sapley, gently, 'where is Mr. Tempest?'

Pettigood the wily, Pettigood the destined, saw that now the winning cards were his. He felt, too, that for the moment he held his two interlocutors in the hollow of his hand.

'Mr. Tempest,' he said with a readiness of phrasing which was new to him, and which he recognised as the outcome of a great situation, 'is frequently spoken of as a Model, I may say *the* Model Stockbroker. He is that, fully. But he is much more than that. He is the most discreet of men, and, furthermore, outside his official capacity, one of the most chivalrous, and of the most sensitive disposition.'

Professor Sapley looked impressed. Mrs. Sapley sighed gently.

'He left,' continued Pettigood pursuing his advantage, 'hurriedly, yet with dignity and consideration. He told me quietly but emphatically' (where, save from a guiding Destiny, gat Pettigood this readiness of lying?) 'that important business called him away, he could not tell for how long.' Pettigood raised a warning hand lest the others should check the flow of mendacious eloquence. 'I was to take charge in his absence and to put everything in order. I think it possible, I may say, knowing him as I do, that I consider it probable, not to say certain, that his departure was due to that extraordinary delicacy of feeling which I have mentioned. He was upset. He wished to spare—ahem! *others* as much—as much as possible. I was to take charge and put everything in order. It will be an arduous task—very arduous.'

Having thus discharged the last shot from a kind of Maxim of the brain which astonished himself by its sudden spring into existence, Pettigood stared hard and meaningly at the Sapleys, Professor and helpmeet.

How gratified was Mrs. Sapley in the recesses of her heart, and how proud of her chivalrous and delicate admirer! She had been more than woman (which she most certainly was not) if a spice of triumph had been absent from the look which she cast at the Professor, who, such was the effect of Pettigood's eloquence, felt terribly ashamed of himself without knowing exactly why.

As before there was a pause, and, as before, Mrs. Sapley was the first to speak again:

'Professor,' she said, 'it seems to me that there is one way out of a difficulty.' And she looked, without uttering, the additional words, 'created by your outrageous behaviour.'

The Professor looked more and more troubled, Mrs. Sapley looked more and more triumphant, though with a secret fear that her triumph could be no more than a passing joy.

The Professor answered, combating a quavering tone with an air of decision.

'Arabella Georgina, there certainly is one way. We must not detain Mr. Pettigood from his grave responsibilities. But, perhaps, Mr. Pettigood's proved knowledge of affairs,' here the Professor became almost obsequious, 'and unfailing courtesy will give me the information I originally sought—that is to say, the best means of obtaining the best skill to solve the mystery of the burglary at The Grange.'

At this speech Mrs. Sapley's look of triumph suddenly vanished for some reason, but the change of expression was not noticed by

the Professor or by Pettigood, who answered with such a tempered austerity as he had sometimes observed in his employer, 'I believe, sir, that Mr. Tempest places great confidence in Mr. Mark Hawley, of the detective police. Should the matter be pressing, I might venture to recommend a telegram to New Scotland Yard.'

'Mr. Pettigood,' said the Professor, and again his sentence ended in a duet with Mrs. Sapley, on the words 'We are very much obliged to you,' and with this they bowed themselves out.

For a time there was between them a silence for which each partner in marriage had private reasons. Then Mrs. Sapley 'up and spoke' the simple but suggestive query, 'A telegram, do you think?' Professor Sapley, with equal simplicity, replied, 'Certainly, a telegram,' and from the nearest place of telegrams the Professor sent a message asking as a special favour for Mr. Hawley's presence at The Grange, and suggesting one of two suitable trains. What part this telegram played in the chain of events, of which the first link was forged during the dimness of the small hours in Mr. Tempest's bedroom, will presently be seen by all who are so disposed.

Pettigood, left by himself, resumed with pleasure the Napoleonic mood. He let his head fall on his breast, and then clasped his hands behind him 'as if to balance the prone brow oppressive with its mind,' words which he would doubtless have quoted had his knowledge and his memory contained them. Instead of which he said to himself, in a masterful tone, 'Thought, tact, action. Thought, for instance, in—in—in thoughtfulness. Tact, in keeping those cat-and-dog Sapleys quiet and persuading the Professor that he was in the wrong. Though in what vagary my master may have indulged who can tell? I fear Sir George Paston and his quackery may have much to answer for. I cannot but think—but thought has done its work, and now for our third item, action. Now, what form should action take? Why, of course, how could it escape me for a moment? I have read somewhere—I certainly have read somewhere—that if fact is sometimes stranger than fiction, fiction often translates itself into fact. So, it was my fiction, surely a wise and benevolent one, that Mr. Tempest' (even in self-communing Pettigood never docked the stockbroker of his *Mister*) 'had left me in charge. Let that become fact! Being in charge, what should I do? Obviously, put someone else in charge and devote myself to the quest, difficult and dangerous it may be, of my unfortunate master. I must at once inform Goodlad, the

clerk next under me' (Pettigood swelled again with the sense of responsibility), 'that the Chief has been suddenly called away—and that is true enough—that I must in his absence absent myself on a confidential mission—and that's not far from the truth—and that Goodlad must take charge of the routine work here for a brief time. And may it indeed be brief!'

This aspiration on the part of Pettigood in search of Adventure was perhaps not so entirely sincere as he thought it was. Not the less he proceeded swiftly to put his plan in execution, by putting Mr. Goodlad in possession of his prepared fictions, and then putting himself as best he could into Mr. Tempest's hat and overcoat, and sallying forth to get, also as best he could, on their owner's track.

The telegram sent by the Sapleys duly arrived at New Scotland Yard, and led to Mr. Mark Hawley being instructed by his official superiors to proceed to investigate the burglary at The Grange, Professor Sapley's residence. He had for the time being done all that could be done in the matter of Mr. Tempest's cook, and was able to catch the earlier of the two trains from Waterloo suggested in the telegram. Now, this train happened to be the very one selected by Mr. Tempest for his journey to dine and sleep at Sir George Paston's house. The two, stockbroker and detective, travelled, unsuspecting of each other's neighbourhood, in very different moods. Mr. Tempest's frame of mind was, as we have seen, made up of many phases, inconstant as the sea, but none of them unpleasant. Hawley's attitude was one and indivisible, and moreover habitual, consisting as it did of intense self-satisfaction. From one piece of work, presenting no difficulties save those which custom rather than imagination had tried to suggest in his necessarily brief interview with the stockbroker, he had passed straight to another as to which he felt convinced that if any difficulties did present themselves he was the man of all others to grapple with them successfully. Therefore, in company with his valise, or dressing-bag, which was neither new nor old, which was marked with a red star, and which had been hurriedly thrust into his carriage at the very last moment by a bewildered porter, he was carried towards his destination, Three-Mile Hollow, in a state of contentment which was helped by an excellent cigar (pressed upon him by Mr. Tempest himself as he left the office) and by the increase in his natural feelings of self-satisfaction and superiority which he derived from beguiling the way by perusing, not for the first time, *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*.

When the long arm of coincidence once stretches itself out, its

reach is apt to be more than equal to that of the spoon needed by one who sups with the official superior of Mephistopheles. Consequently, when Mark Hawley duly arrived at Three-Mile Hollow, and, after delivering his bag to one of the infrequent porters who had gladly noted him as one likely to get out, was about to ask for what in a well-known story is called 'an 'ired affair' to take him on to his destination, he became suddenly aware of a private servant, who, assuming that he was an expected guest, showed him respectfully to a private carriage which was in waiting. (It may be noted, as the deed rather of the Imp of the Perverse than of the Long Arm, that the footman and the coachman were both new in the service of Sir George Paston, and that therefore the personal appearance of the guest, Mr. Tempest, expected at Sanssouci was as unknown to them as was that of the expected detective to the servants from The Grange. We owe an apology to the practised reader for even mentioning these elementary facts.)

Hawley, then, vastly well pleased by the delicate attention thus vicariously paid to him, stepped, nothing loth, into the carriage which, as he conceived, was to take him to Professor Sapley's house, there to investigate a burglary, or, as he carefully called it to himself as the carriage rolled smoothly along the road, a supposed burglary. 'For,' he reflected, 'what would that Sherlock Holmes fellow have done? why, he'd have assumed that, burglary or no burglary, the things missing or reported to be missing *are* missing, and on that assumption he'd have acted until a bent pin or a cigar-ash that had nothing to do with the case stared him in the face to show that they weren't missing at all. What would a French detective do—ah! it's not for nothing I can read and patter French—why, and mind you, Mark Hawley, I'm not going by their Gaboriaus and Boisgobeys, but by their Chiefs of Police's memoirs; why, he'd wait till a Judge of Instruction—pretty instruction, indeed—had got somebody into a cleft stick, and then he'd work on 'information received.' A lot they know about information received! Now, here am I, a plain English detective and proud of it. What do I do? I hear there's been a burglary, well! I don't know of my own knowledge whether there's been a burglary or not. Well, again. And again what do I, Mark Hawley, do? Why, I wait till the clouds roll by. *But* I mark 'em and I note 'em as they *do* roll by, and I tell 'em to say nothing lest it should be used against 'em hereafter. That's what *I* do.' And well contented with this method, perhaps not the least sensible of those he had rapidly reviewed in his mind, Mark Hawley was conveyed to the door of

the country house which he naturally took to be Professor Sapley's.

Arrived there, he found more servants ready to receive him, to disembarass him of his valise, and see that it was taken into the room ready for him, and to show him at once, as orders had been given, into the library, 'as unluckily everybody was out just for the moment.'

'Ah!' said Hawley in his Sir Harcourt Courtly manner, as he accepted the welcome invitation, 'naturally one could not expect them indoors on such a beautiful afternoon,' and so, with much graciousness, chose, out of various refreshments offered him, a cup of tea, in the 'tasting' of which, both in the old and the newer sense of the word, he was pleasantly engaged when, not long after his installation, the library door was opened and there appeared to him Sir George Paston crying, in the first moment, breezily, 'My dear Henry,' and then, suddenly tailing off *diminuendo* into—'Why—h'm—ha—I must apologise, but—'

'Oh! no need of apology,' answered Hawley readily. 'You see the first maxim with me is, never show surprise. So, if Henry is a convenient name, Henry let it be.'

'Why,' said Sir George, 'Henry is, as a matter of fact, the name of a visitor whom I was more or less at this moment expecting to see.'

'Now, now,' answered Hawley, 'I wonder who could have made such a stupid mistake as that. But it's just like them. What am I always saying? Why, if you'll believe me, that there's far too much red tape!'

'That,' Sir George began, and was about to add, that it was a complaint habitually made in more than one quarter, but it would have taken a good deal more than a suave interjection to stop the conversational flow once started of Hawley, who therefore continued, 'You see, sir, they might have thought of putting Henry Robins on to it, but then, though he's my very good friend, and though I say it that shouldn't, for all that, the job's more in my line than in his. You see, there's a sort of a thing, or a gift, if I may go so far as to say so, that you might call just a delicate touch, if you understand me?' Sir George bowed politely. 'And, good as Henry Robins is in his own line, and I don't know a better man in it, yet, put him off his line, if I may use the expression, and where is he? That's the question.' Paston, more and more puzzled, but more and more sedulously concealing the fact, bowed again, fully seeing the forlornness of attempting to slide in a word; and Hawley



continued, 'To be sure they *may* not have known I was available, and, indeed, I was engaged on another matter that's only just been cleared up, and they may have put Henry Robins down as the next best man, and there the name may have stayed; and that's what, if you'll allow me to come back to it, I meant by what I said of red tape; and, as to too much of that being a bad thing, why, sir, who's to doubt it?'

'Who, indeed?' echoed Sir George amiably.

'But then,' Hawley went on, 'there's this which quite escaped me in the surprise of the moment, and that is that they'd never have used a Christian name in anything they might say or write. No, no, they wouldn't have done that; and so that leaves me, if I may use the expression, just as much adrift as I was when I started. But it's possible that you, sir, if I may be allowed so to put it to you, might throw some light on this matter. You see, the fact is, Professor, we don't know everything, though some folk think that's no more than our duty, and one likes, if I may say so, to know just where one is.'

'Ah!' replied Sir George, delighted by the chance thus at last afforded him of making some attempt to clear up the bewilderment of the situation. 'Yes, my dear sir, you would like, and nothing more natural, to know just where you are. I think—pardon me if I am wrong—there may be a little confusion on that point, though in any case I am delighted to see you here. I cannot help imagining from your addressing me as *Professor* that you take me for my not very far-off neighbour, and I may say friend, Professor Sapley?'

'That,' replied Hawley, 'is, or was, a fact, sir. And now I look again may I substitute for the word *sir* the words Sir George? For, let me tell you, sir, that there's not many of *us*, high up, as I may say, at the Yard, that don't know Sir George Paston, the great traveller, by sight.'

'My dear sir, you flatter me,' replied Sir George, in whom the intuition and diplomacy of the old traveller were naturally and not unpleasingly awakened. 'On my side, shall I be far wrong if I associate this unforeseen, but need I again assure you most welcome, visit with an institution which has been justly one of the chiefest bulwarks of our laws, and also with the name of M——'

Now, to say truth, Sir George, though he had now divined his visitor to be an emissary from New Scotland Yard gone astray, was entirely in the dark as to that visitor's identity, and it was therefore merely to gain time, and, if possible, by any unlikely



chance, to conceal his ignorance that he was about to say 'the name of Mr. —?' when, at the very first breath of the *M* sound, the detective's natural vanity leaped to the rescue as he broke in with :

'Mark Hawley! Right you are, Sir George. And of New Scotland Yard at your service.'

'Delighted, indeed,' said Sir George, 'to welcome one whose name,' he finished the sentence to Hawley with muttered flatteries, and to himself with 'was till this moment quite unknown to me.'

'Ah!' continued the detective swelling with a self-importance always 'tickle o' the sere,' 'Ah! Sir George, it's not to everyone I'd give myself away, if I may use the expression, but when I'm dealing with Sir George Paston! Why, sir, what does S'r Alfred say to *us*, of the upper ranks, as I may say? Why, discretion, he says, discretion should be *your* watchword. And discreet, if you'll believe me, and if I may say so, we are!'

Hawley threw his chest forward and looked proudly at Sir George to emphasise his statement, and Sir George, hesitating between boredom and amusement, replied smoothly :

'Valour and discretion, Mr. Hawley, are not too constantly allied, which makes the combination doubly valuable. And I trust *my* discretion may prove worthy of the trust that *yours* has placed in it. But I feel that my duty as a host, who is greatly obliged to chance for bringing you here, is to ask how I can now best serve your interests. If whatever business you may have with my neighbour, Professor Sapley, should be pressing——'

'And most kind of you it is to think of that, Sir George,' broke in Hawley. 'But without violating confidence, if I may go so far as to say so, I don't think there can be need for putting you out more than to ask you to tell me how to get there within reasonable time. For I may tell *you*, Sir George, that two trains were mentioned to me as suitable, one somewhat later than the one I came by.'

'That's well,' said Paston, 'since I shall not be deprived of my guest's company almost at the moment of his arrival.'

'But,' added Hawley, 'there is another consideration. Our business, if I may so express myself, Sir George, is to observe and to draw conclusions from observation. Now, shall I be far wrong in supposing that, though you did not expect me, you did expect another guest?'

'My dear sir,' answered Sir George, secretly delighted with the detective's evident pride in this truly amazing instance of acumen, 'your inference, as I am sure is always the case with you, is

absolutely correct. But that guest is one with whom I can venture on liberties. He is, indeed, my *alter ego*, and should he arrive in my absence, will feel himself not the less at home. Therefore, if it suits you, we will dine early after a stroll in the grounds, and I will drive you over to The Grange while the long twilight of these pleasant days is yet young.'

'Sir George,' replied Hawley, in whom satisfaction killed any desire for apologetic longwindedness, 'I'm your man.'

The necessary orders were given, the two sallied forth for a stroll, during which the course of conversation afforded much self-content to Hawley, and much amusement to Paston, and returned to dress for a very early dinner. Paston, on the way to his own room, insisted on stopping at Hawley's to see that he had everything he wanted. Hawley, more and more pleased with all this attention, was beginning an elaborate sentence of thanks and assurance of his complete comfort, when, his eyes falling on the things laid out for him to dress, he suddenly interrupted himself with a low whistle.

'Is anything wrong?' asked his host.

'Sir George,' answered the guest, 'if I have learned one thing it is never to be certain of anything; but sure I am that these are not my things, and,' he added more than half to himself, 'no sign of that Anglo-Indian get-up.'

Half-formed suspicions grouped themselves in Sir George's mind even as the words were spoken; but from old use he gave no sign of them by word or expression, and answered simply:

'Ha! A tiresome mistake, indeed, the reason of which your quick apprehension will, I am sure, very soon discover. Meanwhile, with your permission, we will dine in morning dress; I will hurry up dinner, and we shall arrive all the sooner at your temporary headquarters, whence you can direct all operations.'

'Sir George,' cried Hawley, 'if I may venture to say so, I was not wrong in setting you down as a man of action as well as of thought.'

'Mr. Hawley,' answered Paston, 'again you flatter me. I will, then, expect you in the dining-room in ten minutes, and after dinner we will get over to The Grange.'

(To be continued.)

## *Darky, the Boundary Dog.*

UNLIKE a good woman, Darky had a past. For years he had belonged to a notorious cattle-lifter after whom a large tract of land in the interior of the South Island of New Zealand is named. Issuing from some hiding-place in this vast and solitary plain, it was the practice of this lonely man to select a fat beast here and there from the roving herds through which he passed, and with the mob thus collected to work his way through to Southland. Once safely there, there was no obstacle in the way of getting rid of the dangerous property, for in those days it was a common practice with many butchers to receive stolen cattle. A price pleasing to both buyer and seller was quickly agreed upon, the beasts were slaughtered with all possible speed, and the hides, which bore the brands of a dozen different owners, hurriedly burned or buried.

In conducting these forays the old cattle-stealer invariably went afoot. By this means he was able, when danger threatened, to vanish into the scrub and to leave the earth innocent of a sign of him. Had he been encumbered with a horse, it would have been next to impossible to escape observation.

By one other animal, though, besides Darky he was always accompanied—to wit, an old decoy bullock. At first sight it may appear that this animal would have proved as embarrassing a possession as a horse. Nothing of the kind. When a stock-rider appeared on the scene he saw nothing to excite suspicion—only a stray bullock, quietly browsing.

To these two dumb confederates was mainly due the success which attended these predatory excursions. It is, indeed, declared by the few old colonists who remain that it is impossible to say which of the three was the biggest thief.

Directed by the gestures of the man—himself concealed—the bullock would approach a feeding herd of cattle and gradually edge away a fat steer. If, when the latter had been drawn off to a distance, it evinced any hesitation as to whether it should turn

back or not, it was helped to a speedy conclusion by a nip on the heels from Darky.

As the hazardous nature of the business necessitated strict avoidance of all bridges and fords, to say nothing of roads, these animals were invaluable aids in getting the stolen cattle to swim the many turbulent rivers which had to be crossed in the journey southwards. There was no rushing about of the mob, to send a tell-tale cloud of dust into the air; no shouts or whip-cracks, to betray the whereabouts of the thieves. Walking a little in advance, the bullock would plunge straightway into the water, and, swimming to the other side, would low invitingly, as though he had found a land flowing with clover and rye-grass. As the younger and more inexperienced steers answered with responsive bellows, Darky would rush from beast to beast, and administering a little persuasion to each, would soon have the mob in the river, swimming across to join the leader.

Nor was this the only service rendered by the decoy on these occasions. The cattle-lifter was unable to swim—a difficulty he overcame by clinging to the tail of the animal.

For years this inflexibly taciturn man carried these raids to a successful issue. But the arch-thief was taken at last; how—though I am sorely tempted to tell—has no concern with this story. Suffice it to say that he was tried, found guilty, and cast into prison.

A more ridiculous conclusion to a serious case could hardly be imagined, but it is nevertheless a fact that the animals likewise had judgment pronounced on them. The bullock was shot on the scene of his nefarious practices, while Darky, who had been led away captive with his master, was condemned to suffer the utmost penalty of the law.

This all belongs to a phase of bush life which New Zealand will never know again; but what a fulness, what a robustness of life was there in the wild freshness of her morning-time! They were adventurers all then. Nor is a young stock-rider, who had come in from the back country as a witness at the trial, the least artistic figure in the picture of the past.

If the court officials lacerated Darky's feelings, witness after witness atoned for it by dubbing him 'the cleverest dog that ever lived'—an oft-repeated statement which appeared to immensely interest the stock-rider. The night of the trial and verdict a game of euchre—which he was discreet enough to lose—took place in a neighbouring public-house between this speculative youth and the

warder who had charge of the dog. Later the young rascal waxed lively and agreeable, and ministered lavishly to the publican's revenue. Towards midnight two black shadows might have been observed—had there been anyone in the deserted streets to look at them—slinking noiselessly in the direction of a kennel on the outskirts of the town.

Next morning, as a raw, gusty wind was bowling across the prison yard and playing skittles with some tin cans which were stacked at one end of it, the Governor of the gaol composedly watched a black dog choked till it was dead, and then, as the law had been vindicated, and as everything had been a perfect success, went contentedly home to breakfast.

When the news that Darky had died by proxy was communicated to the run-holders, a keen competition arose among them. In the end Mr. Belcher, of Rugged Hills sheep station, defeated his rivals with an offer of 50*l*.

But Darky refused to attach himself to his new master. Moreover, it soon became abundantly clear that the latter was going to receive but scant compensation for the gold he had showered on the stock-rider. The cattle-lifter had worked the dog by gesture only, and in the strictest silence. Consequently the orders, commands, and ultimately threats, which were bellowed into his ears were meaningless. But this did not occur to Mr. Belcher. The more bewildered the dog looked, the more that hot-headed gentleman roared, as though deafness were the only impediment on the part of Darky to a perfect understanding of what was required of him.

The man was all the more sore over the affair as Darky was not by any means the first canine treasure he had purchased regardless of cost; and now this latest venture threatened to end, as all others which had gone before had ended, in the sudden death of the dog.

But Darky, cunning with almost weird precociousness, showed a power of survival that was unique.

One day, in the heat and dust of the sheep-yards, after execrating the dog until the foam flew in spray from his lips, Mr. Belcher turned in the height of his frenzy and ordered one of the shepherds to get him his gun.

In an instant Darky was off as though he had been projected by the force of powder.

'The brute's got sense enough when he chooses to use it,' cried the run-holder, as well as he was able to speak for the rage which

was choking his utterance. 'D'you see how quick he is to get out of the way whenever I want to kill him?'

At this juncture Hori, a Maori shepherd, summoned sufficient courage to ask if he might have the dog to see if *he* could make anything of him.

His employer was about to hurl an imprecation at his head, when it occurred to him that the suggestion was worth consideration. He had paid a big price for Darky, and to shoot him meant nothing but the loss of his money—a matter about which Mr. Belcher was a little sensitive.

Weka Flat is a small tract of land surrounded by hills clothed in a monotonous colouring of yellow tussock. Here stood Hori's hut, and here the Maori lived a life as dull in colour and as unchangeable in aspect as the hills which curtained in his little world. No one passed that way, and, save at mustering-time, no other shepherd visited him. Consequently he was left almost entirely to the companionship of his dogs. This seclusion from interruption gave him every opportunity of studying Darky, and in a very little while a good understanding sprang up between the two. As the weeks went by this mutual confidence increased, until at length the Maori was able to communicate by gestures his desires and wishes to the dog; while the dog, in his turn, was able by signs to interchange thoughts with the Maori. After a while Hori was able to send him, without supervision, to gather sheep at a distance of seven miles.

On one occasion, after a muster, Hori had started down country with a mob of five thousand fat wethers. After the first day's drive the rain began to come down in tumbling sheets of water. Then came such a flood as had not been known for years. The rivers spread out and became lakes. Hori stuck to the sheep as long as it was safe to do so, but in the end was forced to ride for his life. After several hairbreadth escapes from drowning, he managed to reach a homestead. Then he noticed, for the first time, that Darky had not followed him.

The next day rain, rain, rain. The whole country was under water.

The following morning the downpour, which seemed to have exhausted itself by starting so fast, fell away and stopped, and towards evening the waters began to run off the land.

All this time Hori had been kept a close prisoner within the friendly habitation he had found, consuming his soul with the agony of not knowing what had become of the sheep.



At break of day, the flood meanwhile having abated, he went forth to commence a search. To his surprise and wonder he found collected on a 'bachelor' hill, the whole of the five thousand sheep, with Darky in charge, solemnly walking up and down.

How came he there? I can offer no explanation, but merely record the fact as one only of scores of instances of the display of a sagacity which seemed to know no bounds. The dog appeared to possess an innate faculty of knowing the right thing to do, and the right moment in which to do it.

Again we find Hori, accompanied by another shepherd and a young rouse-about,<sup>1</sup> on the road with a mob of sheep, bound for Mount Cook district. All went well until an ice-fed river, close to their destination, was reached. As this river—which has no youth, being born of a glacier in the full vigour of manhood—is so cold that any animal that passes through it shivers for the rest of the day, it is customary to allow the dogs to cross with the men in a contrivance known as the 'wire-rope.'

It is natural, perhaps, that a youth to whom the experience is new should feel a little giddy at being drawn through the air some thirty feet above a madly rushing torrent. Be that as it may, as they neared the opposite bank, where the eddying waters leap and spurt against the rocks below, the rouse-about lost his nerve, and, clutching at one of the rods connected with the overhead roller, set the rickety machine rocking like a cradle. In the scramble which ensued Darky was pushed from the platform. As he struck the rocks a sharp cry—the first and last he was ever known to give—escaped him. A moment later he was in the roaring torrent—now swimming, but beating the waters with his paws.

Leaping from the cage long before it was safe to do so, Hori landed on the bank on all-fours. Picking himself up without the loss of an instant, he sped down stream at racing speed. As soon as he had outpaced the current he scrambled down the rocks to the water's edge, just in time to seize the dog as the furious river was sweeping him past.

A hasty examination showed that the right hind leg was broken, besides which there appeared to be something wrong with the hip. But Hori had no thought of looking further just then. His one idea was to get the dog home. Then there flashed to his brain a quick thought. Across the mountains ran an old track which would shorten the distance to his hut by twelve miles. It had long been disused, and might be impassable. Should he attempt

<sup>1</sup> A man to whose lot fall all the odd jobs on a station.



it? In a few moments he had taken his resolution. To his last heart-beat he would try. Wrapping his coat about the shivering animal, he gave it to the shepherd to hold until he himself was in the saddle. Then he took his burden in his arms and set out for Weka Flat.

His horse, Mulcahy Brothers, was as quick on his feet as a rabbit, and in a few seconds was bounding over tussock and 'spaniard' as though he were racing the cloud-shadows. On and on he tore; now dipping from sight into the stony bed of some trickling stream, to reappear almost immediately on the other side; now leaping among a few startled sheep, who scattered and fled; now tearing past Echoing Rock, which tossed back the sound of deep-chested sighs; now rushing through a patch of scrub with the sweep of a hurricane; and now, the open regained, on and on again.

In time the hungry Waitaki was reached. But the cruel grey waters, the hidden quicksands, and the treacherous moving boulders, held no terrors for Hori that day. Without a break in his stride the horse was sent floundering in, and in another moment was fighting the strength and the wickedness of the deceitful river.

At length, trembling in every limb, Mulcahy Brothers stood on the shingle at the other side, at least two hundred yards below the point at which he had entered.

A pause here to give the panting animal breath, and then on and on, the iron shoes ringing on the stones of a wilderness kept perpetually desolate by the river which sweeps it in times of flood.

Beyond this the track, rising high above the water, as the Waitaki bursts through a gorge, became little better than a ledge on the side of a precipice, in places partly washed away or covered with landslip. Once, at a spot where it turned back upon its own direction, while straight ahead the empty air went down direct three hundred feet, the horse missed his footing and well-nigh tumbled into space. But he clung to the rocks with his knees like a goat, and scrambled out of danger.

Bending away from the river, the track ran onwards and upwards through a region gradually becoming bleaker and wilder until it touched the snow-grass. Toiling ever upwards through this desolate track of wind-swept country, where nothing spoke of life save an occasional *weka*, which appeared, slipped behind a tussock, and was gone, Hori reached at length the summit of the pass.

In these altitudes a continuous freezing and thawing takes place during six months of the year. The sun and frost, aided by

frequent rainfalls, easily crumble the slate and sandstone, sending the shattered fragments down the mountain side. Pulling his horse out of the track, the daring rider, without a moment's hesitation, went slipping and floundering downward through this sliding mass of rubbish—every plunge threatening a headlong fall, from which neither man nor horse would ever have risen.

The bottom reached in safety, a wild cry seemed to break of itself from the breast of the man. All danger was past, for there he struck again the winding track, which thereafter followed the ridge of a spur whose foot is planted on Weka Flat.

A few lingering rays of the setting sun were suffusing the crests of the surrounding hills with a transient beauty not their own as the stout-hearted horse, panting and ready to drop, stopped at the door of the hut.

There was a tenderness in the touch of the supple brown hands as they passed lightly to and fro in bandaging the splints, which apparently made the suffering animal feel soothed by the contact. It took some time, and the pain must have been great, yet never once did the dog wince or cry out. He knew that the man was doing him good, and he lay quiet.

In time he recovered sufficiently to crawl to the door and to lie blinking in the sunshine. But Hori was broken-hearted. He knew that Darky would never work for him again.

One broiling hot day the station hands were busy in the yards drafting the weaning muster. As the work proceeded the shouts of the men became almost inaudible in an ever-increasing chorus of lament—the shrill treble from the separated lambs and the deep guttural response from the ewes.

In addition to this infliction, the dust, which rose in dense clouds and hid the sky, soon became almost unbearable. Dust at any time is annoying enough, but only those who have worked in sheep-yards on a scorching hot day can understand what a cumulative irritant it can become. It had worried everybody into such a fever that even Mr. Belcher thought it discreet to refrain from his usual freedom of abuse, and to confine his habitual fault-finding to muttered grumblings, which, although they sounded like maledictions, were not sufficiently distinct to be resented.

At length, when it became impossible to see anything but objects near at hand, and when even they had taken on a visionary look, 'Smoke-oh!' was called to allow the hovering cloud to settle.

Glad of a few minutes' respite, the men moved away to an

adjoining paddock, and, lying upon the grass, pulled out their pipes and lit them.

Of a sudden, high above the din of the bleating sheep, rose a strident cry of 'Look out!'

As the dust slowly settled one of the shepherds had noticed that some careless hand had left open a gate. The ewes had found this out, and, quick to take advantage of a chance of rejoining the lambs, were running towards the opening in confused and noisy disorder. The men had retired to too great a distance to nip the mischief in the bud. Darky, however, who had crawled down to the yards after Hori, was dozing behind the rails. He saw the danger, and tried to prevent it. But he could not hobble to the gate in time. A few seconds later, unable to get out of the way, he was knocked in the dust and buried beneath a mass of scurrying feet.

Before the men arrived at the gate and stopped the onrush the greater part of the morning's work had been undone.

Only those who have dreamt of the devil in a nightmare can have the faintest conception of what Mr. Belcher looked like at that moment. Mad with rage, he dashed his hat on to the ground and danced Beelzebub's own rigadon around it. Desisting of a sudden, he lunged out his foot in an attempt to kick Darky, but, misjudging his distance, barked his shin against a rail.

The shepherds stood rooted to the spot in terror, momentarily expecting to be slain.

But instead of imbruing his hands in their blood a dreadful sort of spurious calm came over the man.

Looking more like the Prince of Darkness than ever by reason of his uncovered head of tousled red hair, his bloodshot eyes, and the thick black paste of dust and sweat which covered his face, he muttered in an undertone which made the bystanders shiver to hear, 'I know what I'll do with the thieving cur. I'll teach him to work for a nigger when he wouldn't work for me. I'll let him know that I didn't sling away my good money to stuff his useless hide with meat. Didn't you tell me, Alick, that the boundary dog was missing from Castle Bluff? Open your jaws and speak, can't you? It is. Very well, then. The thieving mongrel shall go up there. Do you hear, Hori? Take him up there at once, and be off with you! If I catch him at Weka Flat to-morrow, I'll——' Here the man became purely animal, barking, and frothing at the lips.

The life of a boundary dog, to which the run-holder in his virulent

hatred towards the animal had condemned Darky, is a dog's life with a vengeance. In New Zealand the long stretches of wire fencing which divide the sheep-runs are broken in places by the unenclosed roads which at wide intervals thread these great tracts of grazing land. At the gaps thus made it is necessary to have some check to prevent the sheep straying from one run to another. Gates are unreliable. A swagger—the local term for tramp—if he considered himself badly used at the last place of call, as he often does, might maliciously destroy the gate or perhaps prop it open. Or a wandering digger might break it up to obtain wood with which to boil his 'billy'—for there are districts in this part of New Zealand where no stick larger than one's little finger is to be found in a day's tramp. Again, the driver of an up-country coach—if he were alone, as he frequently is—although he might safely get down to open the gate, could not, after he had led his team through, risk the danger of leaving the horses unattended while he went back to shut it. Besides, travellers in general, either from thoughtlessness or laziness, are not too particular in the matter of shutting gates.

As gates are inadequate, a dog is chained at each one of these openings. Generally the most useless animal about the homestead is selected for the purpose, as no quality is necessary beyond that of being an object of fear to the sheep. As the roads cut the fences in all sorts of places, these animals are to be found in the centre of a shadeless plain, by a river's bank, in a sunless gorge, or on the summit of a mountain pass.

As there is no other practical method by which the desired object can be attained, it will, I think, be admitted that there is a fairly valid excuse for the employment of these animals.

Yet there is a serious aspect to the affair. It often has a tragic issue, and, at the best, the fact remains that the dogs are at all seasons exposed to the fury of the elements.

True, a brief joy may occasionally be theirs. A compassionate traveller, or a swagger, to spite a run-holder, will sometimes set one free. But the poor beast has nowhere to go but to the homestead, whence he is at once dragged back to bondage. At rare intervals one is stolen.

For the rest, the hot winds of summer give place to the piercing blasts of winter, but no change other than that of the seasons comes to the boundary dog. Chained to some wild spot, where nothing speaks of movement, he drags out a lonesome life in the performance of a featureless duty. During the night-watches, during the noonday heat, there is the same absence of purpose, the same

monotony of repose. No action—nothing. It is an existence where even thought might well languish for lack of nourishment.

Castle Bluff, where Darky was chained to this living death, stands at the mouth of a deep gorge at the back of Rugged Hills run. It derives its name from the peculiar rectangular formation of the rock, which resembles ruined masonry of titanic proportions. The presence of certain vegetable growths strengthens the resemblance to ivy-clad buttress and tower. The forlornest place you can call to mind would be full of interest in comparison with this desolate spot. Scarcely a sound ever breaks the stillness but the dismal sigh of wind through the tussocks, or the long, low, moaning, which never changes, of running water.

Yet Darky was more fortunate than most of these pitiable animals, inasmuch as it was not his lot to have his wants attended to by one of those miscreants who appear to be possessed with the idea that a dog can go for days without food without experiencing the smallest inconvenience. In Hori he had a steadfast friend, who never let him lack and suffer hunger. Frequently, too, the Maori, when he had ridden over with the regular supply of food, would prolong his stay, silently watching the dog as he dozed in the sun.

As Darky slept he often sighed, for in his slumbers the old familiar scenes came back. Once more he saw the cattle-lifter's danger-signal, bidding him vanish from sight; once more he heard the bullock's low; whereat his limbs twitched, for in his dreams he was responding with a rush. After a few minutes these seemingly real fancies melted into something else, whereupon he started, growling, to his feet. Across his brain had flitted a vision of another master, who seemed to have nothing in his face but bloodshot eyes.

Thereafter for a time he would sit, still in a sort of dream, gazing wistfully at the great expanse of open plain which stretched away to the white peaks of the Southern Alps, which closed grandly the distant view—that plain which he had crossed and recrossed so often in his golden days.

At length, with a sigh, he would turn and glance at the brown face above him for the smile and the look that would lighten his bondage.

Winter came, and with it an anxious time for Mr. Belcher.

Although the carrying capacity of each run is, from long experience, known to a nicety, the temptation to overstock is always

great. In his hunger of gold Mr. Belcher had been enticed into committing this blunder. As the winter, which was a particularly severe one, progressed it daily became more evident that the only way out of the trouble was to muster and get rid of some of the stock at a sacrifice.

The weather was threatening when Hori received the news. For two days dark clouds had been scudding across the sky. With the evening of the third day came the downfall. That night and all the next day the heavens and the earth were blended in rain.

Hori was in a dilemma. He had put off taking food to Darky as long as possible, knowing that when once the muster began he would not have another opportunity of doing so until the last sheep had been drafted from the yards. Now he feared, if he waited any longer, he might have some difficulty in getting across the creek at Castle Bluff.

Towards evening, the deluge being still incessant, he saddled up, and, strapping a side of mutton to the pommel of the saddle, started up the spur to Razor Back Pass.

Before he had gone very far he heard a loud 'Coo-ee!' and, looking back, saw old Alick and Surly Mick, two of the station hands, racing up the spur after him.

He reined in, and waited for them to come up.

'Rain or no rain, Hori,' began old Alick at once, 'this muster's got to begin to-morrow. The boss has sent me and Mick up to help you with the back country, and we're to shake down in your shanty to-night.' After a pause he added, 'Where are you off to?'

His comments on the Maori's kind-heartedness, when he learned the object of his ride, were too rich in personal allusions to bear reproduction here.

Thereafter for a time all three were silent, no sound disturbing the stillness but the patter of the rain against the oilskin coats.

At length Hori took out his pipe, lit a match, and, sheltering it in his hand from the wind and the rain, put it to the tobacco.

'Well,' he said, bringing out a word after each draw at the pipe-stem, 'this won't do.' Tossing away the match, he added, as he struck his horse lightly on the ribs with his open hand, 'Come, Mulcahy! Let's get on.'

'Hold on!' cried Alick—though I am obliged to tone down the somewhat too outspoken language of the original, for the old fellow's disgust was still great. 'If you're bent on acting the goat,



I'll come along too. I might as well go in for a thorough good wetting as anything else.' Turning in his saddle, he added, 'Are you coming, Mick?'

Surly Mick, who certainly appeared to have the best right to that sobriquet of any man alive, for he was soaked in grumpiness as well as rain, muttered a reluctant assent and fell into line behind the others.

An hour brought them to the summit of the Pass. As they worked their way down the opposite slope they noticed that the rain had been much heavier there than on the Weka Flat side of the range. Every trickling stream had swollen into a cataract, which leapt headlong into the gorge below. There was no mistaking, either, the muttering sound which the wind from time to time brought to their ears. The creek was up, and there was no time to be lost.

Slipping and splashing down the track at imminent risk of breaking their necks, the riders at length reached the bottom, and struck the creek.

But it was a creek no longer—a broad resistless river had taken its place.

As they rode on in silence by the side of the leaping waters the light began to fail. Before they pulled up opposite the Bluff, with the river racing between it and them, the view had narrowed and darkened around them.

For a time Hori remained attentively regarding the clumps of flax and *toi-toi* bushes which came looming out of the darkness, went hurrying past, and were lost to sight again.

Presently he turned and said quietly, 'It's been raining where those were torn up by the roots.'

'Well,' replied Mick, out of whom the downpour appeared to have washed the last vestige of any cheerfulness he may ever have possessed, 'it ain't exactly dry here, if you ask me. My boots is full of water.'

Taking no notice of the remark, Hori turned again and looked at the river. 'There's a lot more of this to come down,' he said after a pause. Then, with a wave of his hand in the direction of the Bluff, he added, 'If he isn't shifted from where he is, he'll be drowned in an hour.'

'Well, if he is,' growled Mick, who was rapidly growing worse, 'he won't be the first boundary dog what's floated at the end of a chain.'

For reply—and before his companions had time to interfere—



Hori took Mulcahy Brothers back some twenty paces, wheeled him round, and, holding him well together, raced him at the river.

There was a shower of sparks struck from the stones, a leap, a plunge, and the water was about the Maori's neck.

Twenty paces below, and well out in the stream, rider and horse rose to the surface and went hurrying away with the flood.

The two men on the bank stood open-mouthed, spellbound, watching the drifting shadows. From time to time, as the horse battled against the swirling current, they heard, above the incessant roar of waters, a dreadful sound of laboured breathing.

'If he can only hang on for another twenty yards he'll fetch it,' exclaimed Alick, in a voice he would not have recognised as his own. After a brief pause he added, in an exultant tone, 'He'll do it! He'll do it, by——' The rest of it died on his lips.

Stooping forward, peering into the gloom, he had seen Mulcahy Brothers rear and beat the water with his feet. The next second man and horse had parted company. Then all was swallowed up in the blackness of night.

I am afraid I shall not be considered as reporting very favourably of Alick when I say that instead of exhibiting distress he appeared to regard the calamity in the light of a personal injury. His thoughts turned at once to the muster and to the extra work that would now devolve on himself. Only Hori had known where the sheep were running, and now that he had 'chucked away his life for a dashed dog' every acre of the back country would have to be searched. This meant not only delay, but days of hard work—and hard work is a thing a shepherd detests.

The vision which this train of thought conjured up must have been an unpleasant one, for, bumping by accident against Mick's horse, he accosted his mate with a roughness which nearly led to a quarrel.

Hot words were subsiding into muttered 'Ohs!' 'Ahs!' and 'Indeeds!' when in a flash the two men became as silent and rigid as though they had been stricken into stone. They had heard the sound of iron shoes striking the pebbles on the opposite bank.

With their lungs still filled with the breaths they had drawn, they listened as never men listened before.

After some moments of intense suspense, a 'Coo-ee!' came over the water.

'Hori!' cried Alick, loosening his pent-up breath with a sound more loud than the spoken word.

Presently the Maori called again. 'It's all right. I've caught my horse. Don't wait for me. I shall go round by the Elbow to get back. Good-night!'

'Good-night! And now that's over,' continued Alick, addressing his companion, 'the sooner we make tracks for Weka Flat and get out of these wet things the better.'

As they moved away they heard Hori, as he cantered off in the direction of Castle Bluff, carolling in the musical Maori language some joyous lay of his people.

'Can't see what he's got to sing about,' grunted Mick, 'for it's no smoke he'll get this night with all his matches wet.'

'It's to keep away the spirits,' explained Alick, in his superior knowledge. 'Those Maori beggars are awful funks in the dark.'

Summer came, turning the discordant roar of the creeks to musical prattle.

Summer—and Christmas Day at Weka Flat. A pure soft freshness about the air, a sparkling brilliancy in the morning sunshine. The smoke from the rude sod chimney of Hori's hut reared itself aloft in a thinly drawn column of blue. Hori himself, while waiting for the 'billy' to boil, lolled on a bench outside, idly watching a hawk which hung motionless over a patch of *manuka* on the hillside opposite. Suddenly the bird glided swiftly downward. Instantly a young rabbit rushed into the open and disappeared down a burrow. But there had been a pair. The hawk fluttered out of the scrub with something in his talons.

Breakfast-time at Weka Flat.

Having finished his scanty meal of black tea and ship biscuits, Hori went to the door to knock the leaves from his pannikin. As he stepped over the door-sill Alick slipped from his saddle and nearly jumped on his toes.

Evidently the tough old fellow was in possession of one of the finest jokes in the world, for his face was one monstrous grin.

'I thought you'd gone to Bald Hills after stragglers,'<sup>1</sup> said Hori, regarding the man with a perplexed stare.

'So I did; but there weren't any there.' Nudging the Maori in the ribs, he continued slyly, 'Came back by way of Castle Bluff, Hori.' As his companion continued to regard him with a puzzled look, gravely doubting his sanity, he added, with much wagging of

<sup>1</sup> During a muster sheep which have strayed from adjoining runs are picked out and kept apart until sent for by their respective owners. These wanderers are known as 'stragglers.'

his head, 'Brought someone with me to spend Christmas Day with you, Hori.'

As he spoke Darky came limping round the corner of the hut, and, ceaselessly beating the ground with his tail, dragged himself to the feet of the Maori.

When the first transports of joy were over, Alick, who had been looking on with the proud air of an artist regarding a finished work which he considers his masterpiece, exclaimed, 'As I was passing the Bluff at daylight this morning, and saw the poor old beggar looking so lonely, and happened to remember it was Christmas Day, damme, I thought of it!'

And as the recollection of his happy inspiration came back to him he slapped his thighs several times in rapid succession and went off in a peal of cackling laughter.

'Suppose the boss should turn up,' said Hori, glancing at the track, which wound in a thin dark line across the hills down to the homestead.

'Oh, he's bound to be on the spree on Christmas Day,' replied Alick, sobered somewhat by the look of anxiety he saw in the face of the Maori. 'Besides, it's only for the day. You can carry him back first thing in the morning.'

High noon on Christmas Day, and not a cloud to mar the purity of the heavens, not a sound to disturb the stillness of the earth. A day of heat and repose, of quiet content; a day on which a man might admit he felt lazy and be not ashamed; a day of sleepy stagnation, when even Nature seemed sunk in a noonday siesta.

The shepherds, with no disposition to talk or inclination to smoke, lay prostrate on the grass, silent and motionless.

Darky, in a strange half-sorrowful, half-delicious doze, lay with his chin resting on the breast of the Maori. From time to time he opened the corner of one eye to glance at the dusky face—as though to assure himself that it was not all a dream—and then, heaving a great sigh which shook his whole frame, nestled still closer, and dozed again.

Sunshine and silence everywhere; sunshine and peace, and, begotten of it, a blessed sense of restfulness.

But Weka Flat was soon to wear a very different aspect.

Of a sudden Alick's horse, which had been standing in the shade of the hut, dozing with the rest of them, pricked his ears and looked up.

So still was everything the sound of even this slight movement was audible.

The men heard it and glanced at the horse. The next second they were on their feet, shading their eyes with their hands and looking along the track at a rapidly approaching object, which, comet-like, formed the nucleus of a tail of dust.

Presently Hori whistled a long, low note.

'Dog my cats!' muttered Alick a moment later. 'He's a bit on, too, I should say, from the way he's sitting his horse.'

Before they were able to get Darky out of harm's way they were confronted in full by the savage glare of the run-holder.

At these close quarters they noticed that he carried a rabbit-rifle under his arm.

Mr. Belcher had a grievance. It was written in every line of his scowling visage. The peaceful morning exercised no soothing influence upon *his* mind. Sunshine signified nothing to him but dry weather, and dry weather meant a scarcity of food for the sheep. Even brandy could not deaden his brain to that fact. He had tried it; but as he lay on his bed the creaking of the corrugated-iron roof, as it expanded to the touch of the sun, was a continual reminder of the toasting earth. It was more than he could bear. He felt that he would rather go outside and shake his fist at the cloudless sky, or, better still, indulge in his favourite hobby, and prowl about the run until he found something to grumble at and someone to bully.

As he sat his foam-flecked horse, darting about him, in his aggrieved state of mind, swift glances of suspicion, he caught sight of Darky.

Here was a scapegoat for the bright sunshine, the blue sky, and the balmy air.

'What's that dog doing here?' he cried, scrambling from his horse.

Hori looked very foolish and knew not what to say.

Alick, however, reckless of all moral obligations, answered boldly, 'That's just what we was wondering. I was saying to Hori not a second ago that some blamed swagger must have let him loose.'

'Ah!' was all Mr. Belcher said.

But it was more than enough.

'Stand out of the way if you don't want to be shot!' cried the half-tipsy brute.

With a look of terror in his eyes the Maori seized Darky and held him tightly between his knees.

But this action put no check upon the drunken rashness of

Mr. Belcher. He brought the rifle to his shoulder and crooked his finger round the trigger.

'I'll count three,' he bawled, 'and if you don't drop that dog I'll shoot!'

Alick, who dared not expostulate with his savage employer, could only stand by and watch in despair.

'One. Two. Are you going to drop him?'

But Hori stood on in determined defiance, the dog still gripped between his knees.

'Three!'

The Maoris in the village on the coast would have been at some loss to recognise their kinsman in the man who laid Darky on the grass and knelt at his side, so unnaturally white had he turned.

Tenderly, with the gentleness of a woman's caress, he passed his hand under the dog's neck and turned his face towards his own. But he met with no responsive glance. Darky lay in stiff unconcern with a glaze on his half-closed eyes.

Surely nothing but the special providence which is said to watch over the actions of madmen and drunkards could have directed that shot.

'And now, Hori, you black scoundrel,' cried the bullying run-holder, climbing back into his saddle, 'the quicker you are in getting out of this, the better I'll be pleased; so you can come down to the house for your cheque as soon as you like.'

'Thank you,' said the Maori, looking at the dead form on the ground with eyes that seemed to ache with repressed tears, 'I will make you a Christmas present of it.'

JAMES BUCKLAND.

## *Hampstead Re-visited.*

AS on men, so on their dwelling-places, change seems to fall with unequal degrees of rapidity. There are quiet, out-of-the-world towns in England which, like hale, middle-aged gentlemen, remain for decades hardly touched by visible change. On the other hand, places which lie along the route of industrial and social progress may alter with startling rapidity, like boys on the threshold of manhood. The alteration is not merely an expansion but a transformation, the old features being ruthlessly obliterated by the heavy heel of progress.

It has been the fortune of Hampstead to fall between these extremes. On the one hand, it lay, up to recent years, far enough from the metropolis to retain an isolated existence. A little more than twenty years ago the yellow omnibus, when starting for town, would, through its conductor, announce its direction by shouting 'London! London!' Even now old inhabitants will lapse into the pretty custom of speaking of 'the village.' Its mere remoteness, however, would not have spared it so long had it not possessed, in its high situation, another self-conserving characteristic. Cabmen have been keenly alive to this circumstance; and a story still circulates of a busy editor who, on trying Hampstead about thirty years ago, 'nearly ruined himself' by cab-fares. The effect of the distance and height combined, as a check on population, has been illustrated in the melancholy experience of the more pertinacious inhabitants that neighbours and friends were apt to drift into town as their families grew up and 'society' laid its heavy hand on them. People who went much into London had to practise economies. Younger men, on returning from town, walked up the hill, though, as one of them remarked to his friend when walking together in Norway, the climb was a greater drag than an ascent of several hours in the keen mountain air. Occasionally, on returning by the late omnibus, one would remark the figure of a well-known Church dignitary bearing the tedium of the sluggish



pace, varied by the miseries of the thumps as the lumbering vehicle foolishly essayed a higher speed, with all the indications of a Christian fortitude.

Yet, protected as it has been, the retirement of Hampstead has had to succumb to the march of progress. The tide of metropolitan expansion flowed resistlessly to the base of the hill, and began to creep up towards the doomed village. Concurrently with this advance, the growing demand of Londoners for a place of residence outside the limits of town gave an impulse to the 'improvement' of Hampstead; the local builder, like some traitor in a beleaguered fortress, assisting the approaching metropolitan troop in effecting a surrender.

To judge from the apparent age of the later houses, and from drawings made about that time, the transition from village separateness to suburban absorption must have well begun by the middle of the last century. Yet it was only in the last quarter of the century that the annexation of Hampstead by its mighty neighbour became apparent to all. In the 'sixties one could still on a Sunday walk up from the Swiss Cottage to Hampstead through hayfields, and approach the village by a delightfully characteristic labyrinth of little courts and alleys, while even the chain of buildings which was to connect the village with London by Haverstock Hill had its rustic gaps. Towards the end of the 'seventies the London builder had begun to disclose his intention by much demolition of trees and old buildings on the south-west or St. John's Wood side. The queer little alleys and courts were swept away, the immortal-looking oaks in the hedgerows of the fields fell to the axe, and the lines of Fitzjohn Avenue and some of the adjacent roads were marked out. Two approaches for the advance of London, a south and a south-west, were thus secured, though on the south-east or Kentish Town side a barrier of fields still maintained itself. At this date Hampstead had considerable stretches of old building and avenue where no hint of the invader disturbed one's contemplation. On the west side, Holly Hill, Windmill Hill, the Grove, and adjacent parts had nothing aggressively new. Well Walk still preserved something of a look of genteel old age, and, with its fine avenue, was regarded, like Church Row, as one of the choice fragments of old Hampstead. Frogna, too, embowered under masses of high foliage, remained untouched by the later and more thorough-going effort at reconstruction. In those days one had vistas of toned brick house and wall and stately timber, through which one seemed to look back into the days when the gallants and fine

ladies met and lisped their pretty gossip in the Long Room of the Spa and the gardens of the Upper Flask. Contemplating such an old-world picture, the spectator would scarcely have been surprised to see coming upon the scene the familiar figure of the satirical dean, or of the metaphysical poet, or of him whom the gods loved too well to leave long on earth.

It was during the last quarter of the century that serious inroads were made on these haunts of the past. The Metropolitan Railway advanced a step nearer, and later the tramways reached the foot of the East Heath. The builder was busy closing up, covering the St. John's Wood side of the hill with new and spacious roads, and even on the east side filling up gaps between the Heath and the Kentish Town district. Then, too, the growing pressure of the crowd of flitters into the suburbs led to the erection of new buildings, which but ill consorted with the older ones. An early example of this new and foreign style of construction confronts us in Cannon Place, a particularly dreary example of an imposing row of villas, which impinged on the stately Cannon Hall, with its magnificent old wall, and must, one supposes, on its approach have made the noble pile shiver to its foundations. Another illustration of the modern builder's method of dealing with the sacredness of picturesque antiquities is the long and inexpressibly dismal Gayton Road, which starts from the quaint old High Street and arrives at the dainty Well Walk. A yet more violent forcing of aggressive-looking novelty into the very heart of old-world picturesqueness was carried out when one side of the High Street, with its delightfully varied architecture, was demolished to give place to a monotonous loftiness and smartness of style, the opposite side being left standing, as if to mark the sacrilege; and when the picturesque triangular piazza of Windmill Hill had to lose its low afternoon sun and accommodate itself to the monstrosity of the Consumptive Hospital, and later on to suffer the erection of a depressing row of villas, at the sacrifice of two curiously built cottages at the end of long gardens, one of the oldest and prettiest bits of building in Hampstead. Yet, in spite of these inroads, it kept nearly to the end of the century a few unimproved corners, notably Church Row, Upper Heath Street, together with the delightful old houses and meandering alleys high above this street, Frogna! and the Grove. The *coup de grâce* seems to have been given to the moribund old place by the recent erection of 'sky-scrapers,' in the shape of blocks of flats. As if by a vandalish design, they have been driven, like huge wedges, into the most

retired and picturesque parts of Hampstead. These obtrusive monsters of modern architecture glare down on one in the Upper Heath Street, in the quietest bit of the umbrageous hollow of Frognal exactly opposite some old cottages of a winning lowliness of aspect, in the Grove just at the entrance to the Windmill Hill triangle—as if to complete the obliteration of its old-world charm—and, worst of all, in the venerable Church Row itself, up to now viewed by the lover of Hampstead as inviolate. A careful attempt to devise the most harrowing discords in architecture could, one supposes, hardly have produced a more impressive result. Progress is, no doubt, an excellent thing; yet one cannot help asking whether a little more control might not with advantage have been exercised here on the builder and the house-hunter, so as to save the most picturesque of the villages round about London—the one, too, richest in literary associations—from so depressing a measure of defacement.

Our old inhabitant revisiting Hampstead to-day must be prepared for other shocks. The invasion of the builder has had as its natural sequel the inpouring of what to him are 'strange faces, other minds.' The change in the dress and manners of the Hampsteadians of to-day, as compared with those of twenty years ago, exactly answers to the changes in the place itself, suburban display taking the place of simple, unobtrusive dignity. The concourse on the Spaniards Road on a Sunday morning is calculated to affect our *laudator temporis acti* with a feeling akin to alarm. Even the foolish dogs which figure in the scene near the Whitestone pond, hanging back and barking in rage while the few sensible ones take to the water, seem to have grown more aggressive in their clamour. And then he will have to perceive, by more senses than one, each of them offended in the process, the motor bicycles and cars which rush along the Spaniards Road and down the steep Heath Street, looking to his old-fashioned eyes like fugitive outlaws, or like over-fed beasts stung by panic into mad flight. Hampstead—the old place beloved of artists and quiet students—has, he feels, for him changed profoundly and sadly.

Yet, if our re-visitant will linger in Hampstead and explore a little, he will find much surviving which is fitted to console and even to charm. The village itself will offer more than one agreeable peep into the undisturbed, out-of-date world. As he walks up Frognal his eye will still discover, beyond the stately trees, the eighteenth-century church, with its copper steeple flanking a bit of the picturesque back of Church Row; and he will feel as if he

were moving among vanished scenes as he strolls down the beautiful chestnut avenue and lights on the group of cottages at North End, looking, in their wooden coats of mail, like hoary warriors battered and ready to fall. He has only to walk a few steps beyond Jack Straw's Castle to enjoy a quite delightful example of a steep country lane, deep-cut like one of those leading up to Leith Hill, and overshadowed by lofty firs, beeches, and other trees. Then there are the numerous little vistas framed in by stretches of old wall, above which rises a roof with parapet and dormer windows, flanked by rows of ancient elms or limes which must, one imagines, be survivals, in all degrees of attenuation and decrepitude, from the gay time when the frequenters of the Spa met and gossiped in their shaded promenades; or, by way of contrast, he may climb, as in some Italian village, by steps or steep causeway to a corner of shy, old-world respectability, where he may see how a row of modest-looking houses can be made pleasant to the eye. Nor is he likely to overlook the golden chain of old inns, from the George to the Spaniards in one direction, and to the Bull and Bush in the other. Where near London could one find so many well-preserved specimens of the quaintly cosy hostel of the past? As one looks at them—Jack Straw's Castle, the Holly Bush, the White Bear, and the others—one is disposed to speculate on the curious longevity of inns, and to wonder whether there may not be some mysterious link connecting their length of days with the well-recognised affinity between beer and the sentiment of political conservatism.

However it be with the village itself, our visitor will find the wide-spreading Heath but slightly altered. A little improving has no doubt gone on here and there—paths widened, new and rather stiff-looking seats added to the old ones, dwarfed and inelegant like the old houses; numerous notice-boards suggesting that Londoners are to become overdrilled, as an Italian professor not long since described the Germans. Yet, on the whole, the Heath has been preserved in much of its rugged naturalness, with its little sandy eminences for children's first essays in mountaineering, its pondlets for children, too, and for the older children who love to play with a box of colours; and its trees, from the aristocratic families of Scotch firs, some bent with age, on the heights, to the humble birches and others far below. You may still wander over it in the early morning, even on a bank holiday, and find spaces ample enough and cover thick enough for 'the privacies and mysteries.' Loitering here on a spring morning, you may hear

the finches and the linnets in full choral song, and in the dark November days you may see tiny flame-jets of gorse-bloom, looking like signals for the sun to come, while close by a sprightly robin mans himself for the coming wintry days with his most cheery carol. Even on the East Heath, though by no means a heath like the western and northern tracts, you may on an autumn morning come on a quite charming little park-like scene—undulating stretches of grass topped with elm, oak, and beech, all aflame with colour now, where sheep are grazing and women are gathering the fallen branches for firewood. And where but on the Heath could one look for such marvels of fog scenery; when, for example, a soft morning breeze begins to stir the mist, tatters of it remaining caught in the hollows and among the trees and bushes; or when, on an autumn afternoon, an oblique ray of sunlight pierces the haze, striking on a slope of bright green grass tufted with a clump of reddening beeches; or when a genuine London fog creeps up from the east, as if to depict in dramatic representation the invasion of Hampstead by the Leviathan, its front edge sharply defined, making a weirdly vivifying background for the old trees and buildings at the top of the Heath, while westward there still reigns the effulgent sun?

Our visitor will ask himself how, in these days of swift changes, it fares with the inhabitants of Hampstead. Can the naturalist, he wonders, even with the help of the wise regulations forbidding the plucking of flowers, still discover the many wild flowers named by Mr. F. E. Baines in his *Records of Hampstead*? Does a scared rabbit ever flit across a bright strip of green pathway on the West Heath as it did some twenty-odd years ago? And does the owl, with its foolish, sentimental attachment to old things, still tenant the tower of the parish church as it was said to do then? The people, too—where are they? In those days their figures made part of the Heath landscape—the retired surgeon whose spectacled face reminded one of Thackeray's, taking his morning ride on the Spaniards Road; and among the walkers on the Heath the churchman and man of letters, with his bent form and his thin, white face and yet whiter hair, who loved Hampstead only a shade less than he loved Charles Lamb; the doubly skilled artist who then made the pages of *Punch* beautiful with noble forms, strolling leisurely and observantly with his models, human and canine; the demure ladies, too, who took their preprandial walk on the Heath with the precision of the Königsberg philosopher, so that one could almost set one's watch by their movements; and the ladies

in æsthetic gowns, with the children that seemed to have come out of Miss Kate Greenaway's books to play softly on the Heath. Has the now crowded Hampstead any figures to take the place of these, and, even if there were such, would they be known as the older figures were known? Does the familiar wee pony-chaise, looking like a survival of a Bath chair, continue to take its retiring occupant to some evening party? In those days, too, there came the occasional visitors known to one who knew the scholars and writers, though hardly likely to be discovered by the author of *Records of Hampstead*. As in the remoter days, of which the author of *Sweet Hampstead and its Associations* writes pleasantly and informingly, the literary people and painters would often show a strange partiality for humble cottages, and so remain hidden from the mere connoisseur of the local directory. One recalls the scholar of Johnsonian lore, with his bent figure and unworldly eyes, the genial lady who wrote of Marie Bashkirtseff, and many another. No new cottages seem to have replaced those which have been taken down, and rumour says that the poor of to-day are sadly crowded in consequence of the flooding of Hampstead by the well-to-do. Will the rank-and-file of literary London be faithful to its traditions, and continue to seek repose and renewal of health after the tube has begun to shoot its multitudes to and fro? A gleam of hope falls even on the dark, menacing tube; for, quite undesignedly, one may be sure, it will bring Hampstead nearer the great domed hive of the scribblers. So one may hope, perhaps, that the writers of the future—those who miss the Eldorado of the modern literary dreamer—even if they do not come, as of yore, to stay on the restful and inspiring heights, will at least enjoy short visits to them.

J. SULLY.



## *Diana : A Study.*

### I.

Craventhorpe Hall looks north, and below it, near the foot of the long hill, Craventhorpe village looks northward too. The shadow of the hill shuts out all sunshine, except when the sun goes highest. The land is poor, the countryside featureless. Yet this is the home the Cravens loved. Heavy-hearted, strict, puritanical, generation after generation had turned its back on the sunshine of life ; and what the lords of the soil were, its humbler children tended to become. Their years were slow-moving and sombre.

But in summer these northward slopes and shadowed roofs receive some share of the sun ; and in like manner, now and again, there passes through the stern monotony of Craventhorpe history a brighter figure, belonging to the world without, which enlivens a little the gloom it cannot dispel.

Such was Diana de Boisrobert, whom, in the latter years of the eighteenth century, Lewis Craven, the squire of that day, brought home with him—a sixteen-year-old bride.

The high-spirited, tender-hearted child had been set no easy task. She was beautiful and radiant with life ; and she drew from her long French ancestry a wit and elegance, a lively grace, a joyous felicity of speech and manner, which belonged of right to wider and more happy surroundings. But she had been very faithful. Her need to love and to give was deeper than any desire for gaiety or sunshine ; she had loved her husband with all her heart, and given her whole self to making him happy. The austere, sad-natured man leaned upon her—leaned more and more heavily as time brought her added strength and wisdom. She bore him two children ; and at the end of fifteen years he died, clinging to her and blessing her. The pain of losing him was to her a pain unnamed, incredible.

That was ten years ago. She was thinking of it now, as she sat in her accustomed place in church, and Mr. le Preux preached his sermon. The frosty sky of January peered through the diamond-paned windows, making visible the grey twilight in which the congregation were met, devout of intention, drowsy from the closeness of the air.

Those among the villagers who were awake stared much at Mrs. Craven. They adored her; her warmth of heart drew them towards her as a fire draws shivering children in a winter's evening. It was their Sunday pleasure to watch her, to mark her fair face, her graceful dress and bearing, and that air of fashion which had descended to her from her courtly grandmothers.

To-day they were sorry for her; they knew that she was troubled. For at her left, in his place as head of the house, sat her son Lewis; but the place on her right was empty—empty for the first time in many years. Frances Craven was married and gone.

Diana's love for her daughter was a proverb in the village. 'How will she live without her?' was everyone asking; and Diana's heart asked itself that question a thousand times a day. For Frances, with more than her mother's beauty and much of her mother's charm, had been for ten years the centre of all Diana's thoughts, the idol to whom she offered up a passionate devotion. If others thought that the Craven austerity had touched this beauty with coldness, that her decorum was excessive, her stateliness unduly alarming, these were, in her mother's eyes, but final touches of perfection, before which she felt herself at once humbled and proud. After all, that immeasurable love was not unrequited; and the bond between the two had been drawn yet closer by Diana's championship of Frances against her brother in the matter of this marriage. Charles Reculver was a Papist; but Lewis's angry opposition to the alliance had done no more than deprive Craven-thorpe of the festivities of the wedding. Diana, sitting there in the dark and chilly church, thought of her husband and of Frances with the heartache of farewell; but she thought no less, and with a more bitter pain, of the severance between herself and the young man at her side.

At last the sermon was over, the concluding prayers were over, and the congregation came out into the wholesome freedom of the air. Diana shook off her sorrows and met her village friends, who were lingering, as usual, in the churchyard to win a word or smile from her. True to the inherited instinct of the great lady, she forgot no one, and hurried over no greeting; and if her face was

pale, her talk was lively and her smile sweet. The little gathering was sent home happy, Diana at heart blessing them all for having drawn her out of herself.

As she and Lewis neared the lych-gate the Vicar came down the path, and Diana turned back to shake hands with him. His grave, swarthy face brightened at her look of open kindness and the friendly clasp of her hand.

‘How is Mrs. le Preux this morning?’ she asked.

‘She feels but poorly. This cold tries her greatly. She tells me she never feels warm save when you come to see her.’

‘Pray give her my love. Tell her she shall not shiver beyond to-morrow. And what does she say of you? Is she satisfied with your health and spirits?’

‘Yes; or she should be. She is over-anxious. But she tells me I am equally tiresome where she is concerned.’

‘There is not a doubt of it. But though we all pretend to dislike it, how could we live without some such constant, tender care for us? Mrs. le Preux could not. Tell her we will moralise over it to-morrow; she has developed my faculty for moralising beyond anything. And you shall come in and help us with a little sound doctrine; women, as you sometimes remind us, are so apt to go astray.’

He left them with a look of better cheer; and Diana must now face what she dreaded, the half-mile walk home through the park alone with her son.

She glanced at the tall, slight figure, the proud head, the handsome face, made harsh by melancholy and the unseeing gaze of the fanatic—glanced and sighed. She had given him her grace of deportment, her sunny hair, something, too, of her lips and her smile; but his soul was the soul of a Craven. She loved him—but all their instincts were different. He loved her—but he disapproved of her.

‘It is sad for them,’ she began, as they walked together, speaking of the Vicar and his wife. ‘They are young for such misfortune.’

‘They know it is the will of God,’ answered Lewis briefly.

She did not reply. They passed the park gates and entered the solitary, leafless avenue.

‘Give me your arm, *mon fils*,’ Diana said. There was pleading in her voice.

Turning to do her bidding, he looked down at her, and the love and sweetness in her eyes—they were full of tears—touched his

sullen heart. His eyes, too, grew soft; he smiled at her. For one moment their faces were startlingly alike.

But that momentary softening towards her of itself hurried on the outburst she shrank from.

'Oh, my mother!' he cried. 'You look, nay, you are, so full of goodness and affection. How is it possible you have done this evil? How is it possible you can so lack the only thing worth having?'

Diana kept silence.

'You know you have done wrong,' he urged, frowning gloomily.

His tone had not the deference due from a son to his mother. Diana was so near in age to her children, her sympathy with them was so close and self-oblivious, that they had grown up without a sense of her authority. Talk, confidence, approval or disapproval—all was that of friend to friend.

'Dearest Lewis,' she said at length, 'believe me, my conscience does not reproach me. Your sister is most sincerely attached to Reculver, and he loves her ardently in return. He is a gentleman, a man of sense and honour, and, more than that, he has gifts of mind which must always make his society delightful. It is natural he should adhere to the religion in which he was brought up. Why should he not, since Frances will keep to hers? And how can we say that a system of religion is evil which has helped to mould the lives of good men and women, and drawn them to love God? Surely, *mon fils*, when you have reflected further upon it you will not be able to acquit yourself of some illiberality.'

His face grew darker and darker. For awhile they walked in silence along the hard, frozen road, between the gaunt trees; and then Diana said, in a gayer voice:

'The difficulty is this, my son—you do not yet know, as we do, the meaning of love. When you do, you will understand.'

'Let us speak the truth, ma'am,' he interrupted her. 'I have known for a long time that you care nothing for religion. You are at heart a sceptic, and therefore Catholic and Protestant are alike to you. And as you idolise my sister, and do not love me, there is no degree or sort of pain you would not inflict upon me in order to give her what she desires. This is truth, and we both know it.'

Diana bowed her head. She uttered no word; for the pain he had dealt her was unexpected and very keen. He had never so spoken out before—he seldom spoke out what he felt. These were

words which could never be forgotten between them ; all the less because they were both true and untrue. It was true that her love for Frances was an idolatry ; but not true that she did not love her son. Her heart yearned towards him now, as he strode beside her, his look so like his father's.

And as for her alleged scepticism, her thoughts went back to the dim years before her marriage, to the little house on the Kentish coast where her grandfather, an old courtier, scholar and—yes, truly !—sceptic of eighteenth-century France, had taught her, with bitter emphasis, his somewhat unlovely Deist philosophy and the futility of all creeds. There had been another voice at her ear too, a fainter one, dying soon away, which spoke of Christ and the Church, of our Lady and the blessed saints, of the soul's struggle with sin, and the mystical joys of the Eucharist—a faint voice, but it had awakened echoes in the child's heart which rang softly still. The English Church was dear to Diana now, as all that her husband had loved was dear ; but it was not in her to conceive of it as the one and final pronouncement concerning the relation of man to God.

She did not withdraw her hand from her son's arm. He did not notice its trembling, nor yet the few quick tears she could not restrain.

## II.

Lewis Craven shut his mother out of his heart and life. A bitter smile would show her that he knew to whom she was writing as she sat at her desk, and from whom the thick packets came that reached her every week. The gaiety, the tenderness, the loving regard for little tastes and little pleasures which Diana had lavished for so many years on her husband and children she now lavished all in vain. No wit or vivacity could charm Lewis ; no kindness soften him ; no reasonings pacify or convince him of error. He gave himself up to jealousy, and to his fanatical displeasure at his sister's marriage.

Diana, living on with him in the great sunless house, endured many days of lonely heartbreak. She had no one on whom to spend herself ; and to spend herself was the first necessity of her being. Her longing for Frances became as constant as breathing. But her nature was too sane, her vitality too buoyant, for all her energies to be absorbed by one inactive affection. She began to give herself more than ever to the needs of the little community clustered about

the park gates ; and most of all she gave herself to friendship with the Vicar's wife.

'You are our sunshine,' Mary le Preux would say. 'Is she not, Henry ? When I am weary and irritable, Henry will read me something from a good book to give me a beginning of patience, and then I tell him to stop and talk of you, and we look out passages and quotations for our moralisings when next you come. You see,' she would add, 'we two dare not talk much about ourselves ; it unmans us. You are our sheet-anchor, holding us fast in the roadstead of sanity.'

One evening Diana was standing by Mary's couch, about to take leave. They were alone ; and Mary, more than usually suffering, looked up at her friend's grace and beauty with a sad, affectionate admiration.

'Ah, dear Mrs. Craven,' she exclaimed, 'what would I not give—not for my own sake, but for Henry's—to be like you !'

Diana's surprise and pity were so keen she could not answer, and Mary went on :

'Is it not dreadful for him, through all the years of his youth, to have me lying here ? I were better dead.'

'You wrong his love for you in saying that,' Diana said.

'I know I do. No one knows but myself how good he is—how faithful and tender. I could worship him for it ; he does not know the half that is in my heart. But, oh ! for his sake it were better if I died !'

Diana sat down again and took Mary's hand in both of hers.

'If I were like you,' the sufferer sighed. 'Such beauty, such warmth and liveliness and grace ! You have but to come into a room, and there is light and comfort. And oh, dear friend, think of it—my husband loves me, and I love him. And look at me—look ! I am a young woman, and I might be a hundred years old for any good I am to him.'

It was long ere Diana could soothe her into hope and calm ; and when at length she was able to bid her adieu, both felt that their friendship had been drawn closer.

A few days after this Diana first became uneasy concerning Henry le Preux. When he was present her visits to the vicarage were passed for the most part in vivacious argument—what Mary le Preux called 'moralising'—Diana contributing the wit and audacity, Mary the touches of poetry and attempts at generalisation, and the Vicar the controlling criticism.

On this occasion the criticism was so halting, so *mal à propos*,



that his hearers laughed at the Vicar unmercifully, and his wife bade him fetch his hat and take Mrs. Craven home, that the fresh air might blow the cobwebs out of his brain. It was March now, and a subtle change, more visible as yet to the mind than to the eye, had touched the gaunt trees of the avenue with heavenly promise.

The Vicar was usually companionable, but this evening he might have been Lewis Craven himself, so heavy and silent was he. He would hardly look at her; and when he did she did not like his look. But Diana found a letter from Frances awaiting her at home, and she thought no more of Mr. le Preux until she saw him in church on the following Sunday. Then she was struck by his pallor, by the set look of his hot and weary eyes, and by something peculiar, half-reckless and half-pathetic, which flashed up and died down in his face when once or twice his eyes met hers.

'All my spare moments,' she wrote in her letter to Frances that afternoon, 'are taken up with the delight of the news you have sent me. As I walk in the pleasure-grounds, or go about the village, in all those hundreds of moments which are but passages from one thing to another, this is my one absorbing thought. And if you, sweet one, are so earnestly studying the duties of a mother, why, I must be up and doing too. Your pretty poppet, when he comes, must find a grandmother befitting him. I looked in my mirror to-day, and lamented that I cannot find one grey hair, and vastly few wrinkles. What good looks I ever possessed seem to stay by me still. I walk as easily as ever I did; I could dance if there were any occasion; and I laugh at the tiniest opportunity. Will not your sense of propriety, which you know, *ma fille*, is the very guide of my life, be shocked at the mere notion of such a grandmother? What will Reculver say? It is against the fitness of things; and, in all seriousness and good faith, *ma mignonne*, your mother would fain be older than she is—and that not for the poppet's sake alone.'

As a woman of the world—and that she was, despite her many years of country solitude—Diana could not much longer deny to herself that Henry le Preux was drifting into a passion for her. Her own early and lasting love had given her understanding of the heart of a man. She knew that le Preux was passionate; that the self-suppression he needs must practise, the constant sight of suffering, and the gloom it cast over his house, were but too likely to produce such reaction in his overstrained nerves as might hurry him into ruinous disloyalty.

'Tis a comfort,' she reflected, 'that it has fallen upon me. At any rate, with me they are safe. Let us all but get quietly through the next five or six months, and when I go to Frances in the autumn it will die a natural death.'

More than secure of her own heart, and believing herself able to ward off any dangerous outburst, she would not for Mary's sake curtail her visits to the vicarage. She saw Henry le Preux as little as might be, and when she met him threw into her manner all the motherliness and middle-aged dignity that she could muster.

But, in spite of looking in the mirror, Diana had little consciousness of herself, and underrated the effect she produced on Henry le Preux; so that, after all, the storm broke upon her.

It was a sunny April afternoon, and she was on her way to an outlying hamlet, when he met her walking along a field-path through the green, springing corn. Who could have seen her light and graceful walk, her charming face, her laughing eyes, and all that elegance, that air of belonging to the great world beyond Craventhorpe, beyond England—who could have beheld Diana moving thus, amid the light and sweetness of the fields in early spring, without some throb of happy admiration? The sight of her wrought madness in Henry le Preux. Since the encounter could not be avoided, Diana greeted him gaily and kindly, meaning then to pass on her way. But he turned with her, and before either of them knew what he was saying the words had been spoken. They came, low and hoarse, from white and trembling lips.

'Diana! Diana! I cannot tell you how I love you! I cannot tell you how I love you!'

He seized her hand, and covered it with kisses.

It was an insult to her womanhood. Without doubt her first impulse should have been indignation; she owed it to herself and to the cause of honour to be angry. But a life of inner as well as outward unselfishness has its weaknesses, and Diana, as she hastily drew away her hand, saw only, with a pitying intuition, the causes that had led him to this—saw a vision of a home destroyed, a woman's heart broken, a man's prospects blighted in the prime of his manhood, and felt nothing but an eagerness to defend, to avert calamity.

'Mr. le Preux,' she said, and her voice was perfectly kind and calm, 'when you come to reflect on what you have just said, remember this: it is as if it had never been spoken. We will both forget it. I know well what it means. Remember, I am many years older than you—about to be a grandmother. You are

depressed ; you have been feeling the strain of dear Mary's illness'—(Mrs. Craven had never before used the Christian name)—'and I know so well the tricks anxiety plays with one—how it upsets one's ordinary balance. Believe me, in time this feeling of yours will die away. It is a mere affection of the nerves—it has no root in yourself.'

He listened to her, gazing as if in a dream.

'Don't come further with me,' she began again ; and here he interrupted her.

'Nerves ? What is it you say ? Anxiety ! Depression ! Oh ! and have you never loved ?'

'I have loved, indeed. And, therefore, I can understand you.'

He laughed bitterly ; then, suddenly covering his face with his hands, and standing so before her, he whispered : 'And you could not — ? You could not — ?'

'No ! I could not. I should as soon think of turning cut-purse, or taking to drinking, or anything else absurd and preposterous.'

He uttered a groan, turned away without another look, and fled up the field-path. It was too much for any sense of humour. Diana, watching him, was overcome with laughter.

### III.

But this passion of Henry le Preux' was, as the saying goes, no laughing matter. It had taken cruel hold ; and if, as the wise man says, '*La durée de nos passions ne dépend pas plus de nous que la durée de notre vie*,' there was no telling when it would burn itself out. Here was the whole happiness of two dear friends at the mercy not merely of Diana's discretion, but of chance observation and suspicion. At church, again, she was thoroughly awakened to this. His face was worn and haggard, and he had so little command of himself that he constantly looked at her. He read the service ill ; he preached ill. Her village friends, on coming out, remarked that the Vicar must be in some trouble of mind : was Mrs. le Preux worse ?

Diana now set herself with all her strength to turn this would-be lover back into a friend. She could never have forgiven herself if she had neglected Mary le Preux, and must continue to run the risks involved in her constant visits to the vicarage. Le Preux she met with her ordinary ease and vivacity, and by diverting his

mind warded off, except on rare occasions, any repetition of the scene in the cornfield. So long as she played a speaking part her plan worked well.

It was at church, where she was but a passive spectator, that it utterly failed. Her presence there was a source of overpowering agitation to him. She was herself dimly aware of being the one thing bright and gracious in that sombre edifice, where Divine service, bereft of all its elements of joy or consolation, was performed with the time-honoured dreariness which the Cravens approved. The very melancholy of this praise and prayer served at once to enhance her contrasting charm and to depress any energy of self-control.

Sceptic as her son thought her, and as she was inclined to think herself, Diana was deeply pained and revolted by the impiety of which she was the unwilling cause, and there came at length a Sunday when her distress was intolerable. Even the thought of Frances, that refuge in all hours of trouble, did not avail to ease her. It was incredible to her that no one should suspect what was amiss, that so little remark should be made. Her fears for Mary's peace turned her cold; and all her mingled pity and disgust, her hatred of being an occasion of offence in that sacred place, filled her with an unwonted impatience of the closeness and the gloom, with an unwonted rebellious longing for light and air.

Even her son, dear though he was to her, irritated her. He rejoiced in this unlovely worship, as his father had rejoiced before him. It was in his blood. And in her own— There floated across her memory the vision of a festal altar and its twinkling lights, the breath of incense, the chanting of solemn Latin, and the sudden sweetness of the sacring-bell. And these, again, gave place to the tones of a dry and aged voice telling her with imperious contempt of the vanity of all faiths alike and the worthlessness of any worship.

Next Sunday Diana did not go to church. She proffered no excuse, either to her son or to her household. She was undisguisedly well; she was free; but she did not go to church. The congregation gazed at her vacant place; the service lost its interest for them; their homeward way was dull with disappointment. Sunday was not like Sunday without Mrs. Craven. Where she was present dreariness was impossible; in her absence the dreariness made itself felt.

Lewis Craven on that first Sunday made no remark; but when

the day came round again, and he found her at service-time writing in the library :

‘Are you not coming to church, ma’am ?’ he asked.

‘No, *mon fils*.’

‘Do you feel ill ?’

‘Indeed, no. But you shall exercise your Christian charity and pray for me in church while I stay at home. Believe me,’ she added, more gravely, ‘I have a reason.’

‘And I know it !’ he exclaimed angrily.

In her surprise she started and coloured.

‘Tell me, ma’am,’ he cried ; ‘you are writing to my sister.’

‘What of that, *mon fils* ?’ Diana was mistress of herself again.

‘Reculver has perverted her, and they are perverting you ! I knew it !’

She laughed, so great was her relief on hearing this absurdity.

‘I assure you, my Lewis, you are mistaken. Frances and I write little about religion.’

‘Is it infidelity then ? Oh, my mother, why has God made you such a trial to me !’

He went out abruptly ; and Diana, alone in the library, wept bitterly, for his words seemed to her very cruel.

Sunday after Sunday came, and still Diana was not seen at Craventhorpe church. During service-time she walked or sat in the grounds, with a book or her letter-writing. It must not be concealed that she preferred these Sunday mornings to those spent in church. Here were light, air, repose. She could think of Frances, pray to God after her own fashion, enjoy her favourite authors and the beauty of her trees. She was perfectly happy, but for her son’s displeasure.

That displeasure was heavy and intractable, producing entreaties, scoldings, endless argument, and sorely taxing Diana’s good-humour. If Henry le Preux’ passion had been one whit less persistent and ungovernable she would have yielded ; but as it was, weighing one against the other, she still found Lewis’s anger the lesser evil. She could look to time and increased knowledge of life to mitigate it ; but no time could restore Mary’s happiness if once destroyed, or obliterate from her husband’s conscience the disgrace of sin-blemished service.

Mary le Preux said to her at this time : ‘Three years ago I should have blamed you. But God is good to poor mortals who are laid by. He gives us better canons of judgment and a deeper insight

into those we love. Do what you think right, dear friend. I know your reasons hold good in God's sight. I have taught Henry that,' she laughed, 'bigot as he is about church-going.'

'Ah! will Frances see it so?' Diana thought. She had written week by week: 'I was not at church; I read such or such a book in the garden'; and as yet there had been no comment. She knew it must come.

One morning, as she sat in the library, Lewis entered with letters in his hand.

'I have been talking with le Preux,' he said morosely, handing them to her. 'He acknowledges, ma'am, that fewer and fewer people come to church.'

Diana, seeing Frances' handwriting, smiled.

'You do not heed me, ma'am. You think of nothing but your daughter. I have written to her, and this letter is probably her answer. I entreated her to use her unbounded influence with you to bring you back to your duty—for the sake of the village, if not for your own.'

He turned on his heel and left her—a manner he had adopted of late.

The letter contained an elaborate dissertation on the duties of a lady of position. The disapproval it expressed was unqualified; the reasons, those of decorum. Diana laughed at the dear writer's complacency, and shed tears over her coldness; but when, with some softening of tone, Lewis asked her on Sunday morning: 'Are you coming to church with me, ma'am?' she laid her head on his shoulder and answered: 'No, *mon fils*, I am not coming.'

He stood still, suffering her head there, as a statue would.

'Dearest Lewis!' she pleaded. 'My dear son! Have some confidence in your mother. I am doing this, with sorrow, for conscience' sake.'

'And the villagers—whom your example leads astray?'

'Lewis, I cannot help it.'

The young man sighed heavily. Henceforth he became yet more stubbornly gloomy.

At length, one evening, he overtook her in the avenue as she was walking home from the vicarage. The great trees swung their towering foliage softly above them; already there was autumn in that music, though the leaves were still green.

'You are burning to tell me something,' said Diana. 'Tell me now.'

She had no suspicion of what was coming. He began at once:



'Do you know that the law provides for the punishment of persons who refuse to attend Divine worship?'

'I know nothing of the law. Why, *mon fils*, do you mean to prosecute me?' Diana laughed at the little jest.

'It would mean,' he said, 'your trial at the assizes.'

'And imprisonment?' Diana laughed again.

'No; a fine of twenty pounds for every month of absence.'

'You are well-informed, *mon fils*.'

'As churchwarden it is my duty.'

'But, seriously, Lewis, what is this? Ah, my dear, don't look at me so! Am I not your mother?'

'God help me!—my mother. For the honour of God, ma'am—for the sake of ignorant souls, for whom we are responsible—if you do not henceforward attend church, I must do it—must prosecute.'

He paused, then added: 'You best can judge what my sister's feeling will be.'

In the library at Craventhorpe Hall, Lewis made Mr. Hewson, the family lawyer, show Diana the Statute—23 Elizabeth—under which he was about to bring the action against her. By his desire the Vicar was present.

Le Preux knew only too well the reason of her non-attendance, though he ostensibly imputed it to a leaning towards Rome, as her son did. To-day his inward agitation was extreme. On the one hand was a fierce, vivid dread of what might happen if she spoke out; on the other, no less fierce and vivid joy. She was going through all this, she was imperilling her very soul, not only for Mary, but also for him. Looking at her there, wan and sorrowful as he had never before seen her, he could hardly refrain himself from springing up and declaring his love for her.

Diana, so wan and sorrowful, was not thinking of him, nor yet of that Statute of Elizabeth, nor of the assizes or the twenty-pound penalty. A letter had reached her an hour ago. Frances had met with an accident, slight in itself, but it had cost her her child. Mr. Hewson argued, inquired, explained, but she hardly heard.

'If Mrs. Craven would but tell us her reasons,' he said. 'An Act of the 1st Elizabeth provides that any reasonable excuse be allowed. Has there been any little misunderstanding that could be put right? Could the Vicar tell us?'

At that le Preux started and Diana roused herself.

'Mr. and Mrs. le Preux are my friends,' she said quickly, and with a smile. 'I am confident of their sympathy if I were to

explain myself to them. Meanwhile, I feel it better to keep silence, so that all responsibility may rest with myself.'

The little lawyer shook his head sadly.

#### IV.

There had never been more excitement in the county than at those Tringford Assizes when Diana Craven was tried.

Ten days before she wrote Frances the whole truth; for her daughter had become so coldly reproachful she could not bear it. The letter finished she sat pondering over it, then tore it in pieces and burnt it. Not even with Frances would she trust Mary's peace. She sent a note, blotted with tears, passionately entreating her child to trust her—not to turn from her.

When she drove into Tringford—her son riding by the carriage—no answer had come. She was cold with fear, yet thankful. For Mary le Preux had had herself wheeled up to the Hall to embrace her before she started. Mary could hardly speak for pain; but her face spoke for her, and Diana, deeply touched, blessed God that she had kept her resolve of silence.

They were in Tringford now, turning into the square where the court was held, and Diana was roused from her musing by a noise of trampling feet and shouting: 'Here he is! Here he is! Give it him! Give it him!' The carriage stopped perforce, and Diana sprang from it. A mob, armed with stones and rotten eggs, was surging around Lewis. One moment she saw him sitting his horse, his teeth set, his eyes blazing, a mark for their missiles. The next, they had pulled him down, and she was at his side.

These were Craventhorpe folk, many of them, and they fell back before her, gazing at her open-mouthed. For Diana's face was proud and smiling; she met them not as a forlorn and persecuted woman, needing championship, but as the great lady they knew so well—knew and adored.

'Give me your arm,' she said in her clear voice, 'and let us go in.'

Lewis, looking round him with a face of haughty contempt, gave her his arm and led her through the crowd and into the courthouse, after the manner of a prince royal escorting a queen. Diana, as she passed, smiled and nodded to the people, and they, her friends, for very perplexity smiled back at her.

The sight of this hostility to her son put Diana on her guard. For his sake she must maintain a bearing easy and self-possessed.

Excitement had lightly flushed her cheeks, had made her eyes shine, had enhanced in her whole person that charm of grace and brilliance by which her very silence was eloquent, vivacious. As she sat there, erect, composed and smiling, the centre of all eyes and thoughts, in the ill-lighted, closely packed court, no one could have guessed that she was inwardly torn with anxiety and grief, and with impatience at the absurdity of her position.

Lewis watched her keenly as his counsel opened the case. There was a learned disquisition on that Act of the 23rd Elizabeth, an impressive setting forth of the effect of the defendant's example, so injurious to the highest interests of individuals and of the State, a solemn calling upon judge and jury to enforce a law too long suffered to be obsolete. The plaintiff had set them a noble example—at the call of public duty the plaintiff had overcome even the natural reluctance of a son to grieve or injure his mother.

At this there was subdued movement in the court. Every look was bent upon Diana. The slightest appearance of distress would rouse all these spectators against her son. They saw her turn towards him with a smile.

The two witnesses for the prosecution were the Vicar and a servant from the Hall, who proved that Mrs. Craven had not attended church for six months. Henry le Preux' evidence was almost inaudible, his face livid. Watching him, Diana thought of his wife. 'Do not fear so,' she could have cried to him; 'you are very safe.'

Wearied by the closeness of the air she scarcely heard the counsel for the defence. Instinctively, in the sight of so many persons, she maintained her outward serenity; but inwardly she began to tremble. Her great dread returned. Frances had not written. Could this mean a permanent estrangement between them? Was she shut out henceforth from the one heart for whose love she so hungered? Frances, so stately and correct of behaviour, so easily alarmed by anything unusual or ridiculous—could she be expected to forgive her mother for having been tried at the Tringford Assizes?

There was little defence to be made; the obsolescence of the law, the well-established tradition of liberty, were all her counsel had to plead. He made the best of it; but the law was the law, and Diana Craven had broken it. She was roused from reverie by the speech coming to an end, and by the judge's clear, commanding voice addressing the jury.

In another few moments it was over. The jury, who could do

no otherwise, had brought in their verdict of Guilty ; the judge had pronounced the unavoidable sentence. Diana went through her part in the comedy with smiling composure, yet heeded nothing but the sickening whisper : What will Frances say ? What will Frances say ?

Then a murmuring in the crowd warned her again. She beckoned to Lewis, and would not move till he came up and once more gave her his arm. As before there was a hush ; all were watching this mother and son.

Diana sought vainly for any softening in Lewis. The very kindness of her manner towards him angered him. He cared nothing for the crowd ; all he cared for was to see her subdued, penitent.

Slowly they walked down the broad passage to the outer doorway, Diana's heart sick and cold within her—Frances, its one longing.

The noon sunshine, low in the winter sky, streamed on the square and on the crowd gathered in it. Suddenly all eyes were turned one way, as a carriage drawn by four steaming horses swung in from the London road and pulled up in front of the courthouse. A Craventhorpe woman cried aloud : ' She be come ! Mrs. Craven, ma'am, she be come ! ' and Diana, passing out into the sunlight, beheld Frances springing from her carriage to meet her.

Those who saw Diana's look at that moment will never forget it. Speechless, she gazed into that beautiful face, and yielded herself to the embrace of those dear arms. Was this indeed Frances, and Frances so warm, so loving ?

Behind her stood Charles Reculver, who bowed low over her hand as she gave it him.

' You are coming home with us, *maman mignonne*, ' Frances cried. ' You are coming now, at once. '

Diana, unable to speak, looked at her son-in-law.

' 'Tis he who thought of it, ' explained Frances, obtuse as they are whose head is quicker than their heart. ' I showed him your letter. It is all his doing. '

' You will not refuse us, ma'am ? ' said Reculver. How frank, how kind his face was !

' Ah ! how could I ? I am overcome, ' Diana sobbed rather than spoke.

It was then she turned to look for Lewis. He had left her side.

' Find Mr. Craven, ' she bade the footman waiting by the Craventhorpe carriage. ' Beg him to come and speak to me. '

While they waited for him Frances made her mother get into the carriage with her and her husband.

Lewis came at length. He eyed Reculver with undisguised hatred, then bent his look no less angrily upon his sister and mother.

'I have but one entreaty, ma'am,' he said. 'Since you leave me thus, I pray you never to return.'

With that he left them.

Torn by a cruel mingling of joy and anguish, Diana sank weeping into her daughter's arms; and as Reculver's carriage bore her further and further into distance, Lewis Craven, his face set, his eyes heavy and unseeing, turned his horse's head towards the long and mournful hillside whence, over miles of featureless country, Craventhorpe Hall looks north.

FLORENCE HAYLLAR.

## *Nera's Song.*

Nera, the Harper, after spending a year in Faeryland, comes on November Eve, laden with primroses and golden fern, to the Court of the Warrior Queen Maeve and her daughter Fionavar at Rath Croghan.

I BRING you all my dreams, O fierce-eyed Maeve;  
     There are no dreams in all the world like these,  
 The dreams of spring, the golden fronds that wave  
     In Faeryland beneath dark forest trees—  
     I bring you all my dreams.

I bring you all my dreams, Fionavar,  
     From that lost land where every dream is sweet  
 I have brought you a little shining star,  
     I strew my primroses beneath your feet—  
     I bring you all my dreams.

I bring you all my dreams—your swords are sharp,  
     Ready for battle—yet you smile and say:  
 ‘Here is the Dreamer with his foolish harp,  
     Now shall he wile an idle hour away’—  
     I bring you all my dreams.

EVA GORE-BOOTH.



## *Seventy Years Ago.*

ABOUT seventy years ago William Cobbett, taking advantage of the general election which had been necessitated by the first Reform Act and was to make him member for Oldham, conceived it his duty to publish, in an 'Address to the Electors of the Western Division of the County of Surrey,' his opinions upon certain matters with which he hoped the reformed Parliament would deal. Dated 'Normandy Ash, December 1, 1832,' and running to eight pages of sturdy English and violent invective, the little pamphlet no doubt had its burning interest for those to whom it was addressed, and possibly helped to keep them warm during the last weeks of 1832; but that is all gone and forgotten long ago, and now it is with another interest that one follows the rush of the impetuous sentences. Whether Mr. Leech was successful at the hustings, as Cobbett desired, or whether 'the county of Surrey was so base as to sell itself to the *breakfasts* and *dinners* of a money-monger' like Mr. Denison, one cares not two straws to-day; nor does one, except historically, care more than that for Cobbett's opinions, either on the state of the country, or the character of the candidates, or any other subject. The charm of this address is of another order. The thing calls up visions of raw winter days and bad roads; of travellers by coach and waggon bringing news; of quaint farmers and yet quainter shopkeepers; of fierce disputes in the old-world streets of Guildford and Godalming and Farnham, and in the dingy tap-rooms and parlours of country inns. Incidentally it contains evidence as to the life and outlook of the labouring classes, both then and at a yet earlier date; it discusses their interests and prospects; and lastly, by taking a view of these matters which no one now can possibly entertain, it affords a contrast by which we may examine our own views, if we have any; and at least enables us to measure how far the labouring world has travelled in the seventy-odd intervening years.

It has been said that the address is violent; it would not be Cobbett's if it were not that. But beneath its disingenuous argument, its bitterness, its absurd extravagance, there is perceptible in it the genuine conviction of the writer that the country he tried to serve was going down hill, that the people he loved—including the Surrey farmers and labourers, who in a most special sense were his own people—were being ruined body and soul. It was not an uncommon nor an unnatural view at that time, when one person in every seven was a pauper, when 'hundreds of farms were tenantless because no possible reduction of rent could induce the occupier to incur the charge of the poor-rate'; when 'in one parish in Buckinghamshire the rates had risen from 10*l.* 11*s.* in 1801 to 367*l.* in 1832. The landlord of the parish had given up his rents; the tenants had given up their farms; the clergyman had given up his glebe and his tithe. It was seriously proposed to parcel out all the land in the parish among the paupers, and to support them, till they could support themselves, out of rates levied on the neighbouring villages.'<sup>1</sup> But it is unnecessary to describe here the entanglement of misery—the uncertainty of employment and the starvation, the pauperism, the despair leading to organised riot and arson—into which the peasantry had fallen after the great war and the enclosure of commons and the introduction of machinery. Not a reader but an eye-witness of these evils, not a casual observer of them but one who dwelt in their midst and saw his own personal friends suffer under them, Cobbett had no theory of evolution to help him understand what was happening, and little of that conception of progress by which the present time is obsessed. He looked back, as in like circumstances we should do, to the more prosperous days he could remember; and, seeing none but the most mechanical causes for the dreadful change, he went atilt at any of these, just as occasion offered, seeking all the while not to subvert the Constitution, as his opponents thought, but to restore the order which was the only type of well-being he could conceive. Like Carlyle after him, the terrible Radical was in fact a most stubborn Conservative at heart. And thus we find him, in December 1832, in an attack especially directed upon the tithes, and the malt, hop, and soap taxes, unconsciously leaving for us faint suggestions—like photographs all but faded away—of the life which the peasantry had once lived and should live again, if his violence could prevail.

<sup>1</sup> Spencer Walpole, *History of England*, vol. iii.

It is a most unfamiliar world, this, into which we get such tantalising glimpses. 'You all know,' he writes, 'that your fathers, or your grandfathers, used to take a sack of barley to the malt-house, and bring home a sack of malt in *exchange*.' But that piece of common knowledge, which in Cobbett's time all the electors of West Surrey were supposed to know, has sunk so far down into oblivion that we hardly understand now even why men should ever have done any such eccentric thing. In those blissful times, however, men brewed their own beer. 'In 1821 . . . a Committee (of Parliament) sat to ascertain the cause of the *distresses of agriculture*. Mr. John Ellman, of Sussex, told that Committee that forty-five years before that, when he became a farmer, every man in *his parish brewed his own beer and enjoyed it by his fireside*; and that now *not a single labourer in the parish brewed his own beer*, but had to drink water; and before the same Committee the Sheriff of Wiltshire said that the labourers of that county, who used to have plenty of bread, meat, and beer, now went to plough with *cold potatoes in their bag*, and had nothing *but water to drink!*' And what was the cause of this desolation? Only too obviously to Cobbett it was the tithes, and the taxes on malt and hops, which must all therefore be removed without delay. The malt-tax, he says, 'would be enough to ruin any country upon the face of the earth. Malt produces the *drink of all the people*. This drink is necessary to the vigour, the activity, the good humour, and the health of the working people.'

Indeed, Mr. Cobbett takes a high tone on the subject. 'Upon our conduct relative to it,' he suggests, 'may finally depend the peace and prosperity of our country.' In another place he asserts that 'two effects most cruelly injurious to farmers and labourers have arisen out of these oppressive taxes: the first, that the young men and maids have been, on account of the great expense of beer, driven from the farmhouses in greater proportion than they would have been; hence, they have been driven to the public-house, to a disorderly life, and to all the other moral degradation that we witness; hence the necessity of great jails and of treadmills; hence Sturges Bourne's *special vestry bills*; hence the hired overseers; hence the unnatural state of things between the labourers and the farmers; hence the deep-rooted resentment of the former, and hence the constant alarm and sleepless nights of the latter! And until the abolition of the tithes and the repeal of these monstrously oppressive taxes shall

take place, never will there be, and never can there be, peace and happiness in England again.'

It is the wild talk of a man whose heart dictates theories to his head, and of little interest now, save for its reference to those vanished times, when young men and maids lived under the roof of the farmers who employed them, and the cottager (as Spencer Walpole puts it) was in 'the position of a small farmer, with a little house of his own.' Cobbett could see nothing but to go back. And from one last excerpt from his pamphlet we may deduce the system to which he would have reverted. He is writing of the hop-tax; and 'were it not for this monstrous tax,' he argues, 'every farmer would have a little bit of hops, enough for his own use, and every labourer would have a dozen or twenty hills in his garden, and not have to go to a shop to buy hops, if he were able to brew them.'

He 'would not have to go to a shop.' Did Cobbett at all realise the extraordinary suggestiveness of that simple phrase? Or could he have anticipated such degeneracy as we have reached—though the hop-tax is gone—when no labourer ever wants hops, even from a shop, and none would know what shop to go to, even if he were so peculiar as to seek them? The words, slipping almost by chance from Cobbett's pen, indicate the ideal existence which he still hoped the labourer might regain. It was an existence independent of shops. Some few commodities, perhaps, the farmers and labourers might obtain at fairs and markets—the Farnham hop-growers, for instance, might still bring home a year's supply of cheese from Weyhill Fair, when they had sold their hops—but for the greater part of his wants the rustic, to please Cobbett, would have been self-sufficing. Only with some such idea could it have been put forward as a grievance that a man desirous of brewing beer should be obliged to buy the necessary hops at a shop. It seems to us extravagant to the last degree to complain of such a thing. To Cobbett, on the other hand, it seemed the most natural thing in the world, because he was not thinking of a poetic dream—an Arcadia that never had existence, but of a way of living that was in part actually surviving then, and of which some faint traces were to survive to this hour, although it has all but disappeared.

These pages are written in the 'Western Division of the County of Surrey,' within a mile of Cobbett's birthplace, and amid neighbours whose grandfathers or great-grandfathers may very well have known him. But though these talk the dialect that was his

own as a boy, and cultivate their gardens in the old way, and are at heart, perhaps, much like the men whose cause he championed, yet if he could come among them now he would be puzzled what to make of them. The seventy years' interval has done its work ; but the people are not ruined, as he feared they were going to be : they are comparatively prosperous. They earn double and treble the wages of 1832, without working twice and three times as hard for them. In the way of comfort they enjoy so much that Cobbett would have begun to fear for them, not the starving effects of poverty, but the enervating effects of luxury ; and they are equipped with conveniences of which, perhaps, he never dreamt at all. Would he not rejoice to see, for instance, the scrubbing-brush, that has replaced the 'waze of straw' with which the old wooden dinner-platters, not to speak of the sink and the brick floor, had to be scoured in his day ? Would he not marvel at the plentiful water-supply ? And again, might he not shake his head at the muslin curtains which are the pride of many a cottage window ? or sneer at the bedroom fireplace ? or look round wistfully for the draughts that whirled under the kitchen door, and kept the wood fire cheerful and one's feet cold beside it ? The schools, the isolation hospital, the workhouse infirmary, would dazzle him with their appointments ; the weekly newspaper might suggest sources of knowledge, and the branch of the Oddfellows' Club would seem to him to provide a power of organisation, that would almost alarm him ; and as likely as not his conservative heart would be shocked, and his grumbling temper fired, by all these innovations, to preach a gospel the very opposite of that which he advocated so stormily in 1832. For the men and women, so like those he knew and in reality so able, would seem to him both degenerate and upstart. He would ask, 'What more can they want ?' He would wonder what they do with themselves in their spare time. But whatever he thought, and whether he approved or disapproved, he would observe that the old self-helpful life, which was the one ideal he could conceive for them, had disappeared for ever. The signs he took to be tokens of ruin have proved to be signs only of a great transition. Some parts of the old life—the spinning and the village weaving—had quite vanished in his time ; others, like brewing, were fast going ; but the change was as yet too slight for him to understand it. It is only now that the world can appreciate what has happened, and estimate how far the transition has gone.

Looking round Cobbett's native county for vestiges of the old

life, it is remarkable how few of them can be found. The alteration has been radical, and has extended even to the appearance of the countryside. And yet just here the ancient conditions must have lingered long after they had disappeared from other places; for the enclosure of the commons, which elsewhere had already produced such unintended desolation, was not effected here until less than half a century ago. Up to 1857—a quarter of a century later than the date of Cobbett's pamphlet—the people of this parish were still in the enjoyment of the privileges, and were living the life, which he wished to see restored to all. It is in the comparatively short time since then that the habits and interests of the older peasantry have faded away so completely as hardly to leave a trace which one can identify as theirs.

Of this revolution certain changes in the appearance of the country are the outward visible sign. With the ancient heaths of the neighbourhood now partly replaced by cottage gardens and the 'grounds' of villadom; with the old woodland roads and paths forbiddingly fenced on either side, sometimes by barbed wire, it is plain that the village life must have undergone strange transformations. It has, indeed, travelled from the openness of the common to the jealousy of private property. Of one of the industries—the not unpleasing occupations rather—which had to be given up when the common was enclosed, it is not necessary to write. The experiences of other parishes were repeated in this. In vain one would look now for the varied herd of cows, which before 1857 used to be driven homewards of an evening down the valley, and gradually disperse to the several cottages. A few tethered goats are visible; but the cottager who wants milk to-day must imitate him who wanted hops in 1832, and go to a shop for it. All the profit and pride and the satisfaction of self-support that arose from keeping a cow or two on the common has been lost to the villager, not because of his indifference to it, or because a better substitute has been found. On the contrary, it is because he and his family go without milk. Another deprivation which the village folk have suffered, by reason of the transformation of the country, is that of sport. The wily and daring youth, who lived to brag of the revenge he took upon a huntsman by misleading the hounds all across Moor Park, would now find that park closely fenced, and would grow to manhood without seeing either hounds or huntsman. Some furtive poaching, some sly ferreting, perhaps goes on, but it cannot be much. Squirrel-hunting in the fir-woods is a Sunday afternoon recreation.



But in general the countryman is fenced out from the country, and neither experiences its charm nor could practise the sports and crafts once proper to it.

Amid the many topographical changes, however, one kind of feature stands out unchanged, with strong suggestion of a surviving taste which now lacks encouragement. It has, perhaps, nothing to do with self-help, but something with self-respect; and I am fain to linger over it for a moment. Here and there may be seen a garden enclosed by an ancient hedge, whose well-clipped neatness tells plainly of traditional care. So trim it is, so close and thick, that one divines that the owner dwells in the cottage within, and has inherited from his father and grandfather his love for his hedgerow. This is not a common thing. The day labourer, renting his cottage by the week, cannot have such an affection for his home as his grandfather may have had, who was hired by the year and was almost prohibited by law from moving out of his own village. At most cottages, therefore, while the garden ground is as well tilled as ever, the hedgerow is left to go to ruin. Two adjoining cottage gardens here are separated from the adjacent lane by a continuous hedge. Of this hedge, one part is kept neat and thick and clear of weeds: the same family has been keeping it so for half a century. The other part, enclosing a weekly tenant's garden, is a ragged eyesore of overgrown quick, waving brambles, weeds, and rusty tin cans. Yet this part too, they say, was once a splendid hedge. Its owner, who kept cows on the common, was so careful of its beauty that, did his wife but venture to lay a piece of her washing across it for airing, he would throw it—shirt or sheet or his own smock-frock—to the ground in angry protest. This pride, however, is now rarely indulged; and one might hardly believe that it ever had existence, were it not for the three or four hedges here spoken of, and one—only one—modest piece of topiary work, where the yew hedge, like an ancient monument, tells of an interest that once was exalted into almost a fine art.

So far I have mentioned only such interests or hobbies as have been abandoned under the pressure of circumstance. If we could believe Cobbett, the brewing of beer was another of these. Yet there may be another reason why this and others of the former peasant employments have been given up. One or two of them, whose very names suggest the old quiet countryside, might, for all one can see, still flourish if they would, but they are simply going out of fashion. They are going; they

are not quite gone. If you want home-made wine—of the cowslip or the elderberry sort or of the white English grape—you will even to-day more wisely seek it in the village than at a shop. For the making of it continues agreeably to employ the skill and to satisfy a want of a few old-fashioned villagers. The younger ones, who have been to school, neither know how to make it nor would care for the trouble if they knew; but it is to be had. It is even difficult not to have it in some cottages; where it is kept for a Christmas treat perhaps, or for a winter night's comfort, or may be to offer—not sell—to a visitor, with all the ungrudging pride of the self-supporting peasant of other days. As this pride, however, is a joy not known to the younger people, so the art of wine-making is being forgotten. So, too, that of making cider has died out, at least here in the very west of Surrey. I once heard, but I never saw, the only cider-press of the neighbourhood at work. It belonged to a man who is now dead. The famous old English drink, mead, is so uncommon that all I have heard of it in the district is an old man's mention of having some given to him, years ago. There may be, possibly, one or two old stagers who could make it, if they had the honey. But honey itself has now to be procured at a shop. The straw bee-skeps that once adorned old cottage gardens are long since worn out, and they have not generally been replaced by the new-fashioned but costly hives of science. Bee-keeping, in short, is another industry, both interesting and profitable, which all the advantages afforded by miles of heathland have not persuaded the labouring folk of Surrey to keep up.

Gradually but surely the rustics are losing the ability to do things for themselves. As yet the industrious labourer mends his own and his children's boots, but he will not do it much longer. The shop will spare him that trouble; and, depending on the shop, he will forget his cunning. In a score of unnoticed ways he may save labour and dispense with skill. He can buy ready-made handles for his garden tools, better than those his grandfather would have cut from the coppice; he can roof his pigsty with corrugated iron instead of laboriously thatching it with heath from the common or straw from the farmyard. If his wife goes hop-tying, he need not go weeks beforehand to cut the rushes for her use, or encumber his cottage floor with them, and then at last scald them to give the needful lissomness; for bast is purchasable, and if not quite so good as rushes for tying hops, still it will serve. To come to things more important—

instead of the wood and turf for fires, both involving trouble or labour and skill to procure, there are coal and coke to be had for payment. Firing comes from the shop, and light, and the matches that produce both. There is no tipping of split sticks with sulphur to make matches, no burning of tinder, no preparing of rushlights or boiling of fat into which to dip them, to vex the soul of the weekly tenant. Everything is done for him; and it is not necessary any more that he should know how to make anything for himself, or how to do anything except the particular job at which he happens to earn his wages.

His clothes are bought ready made; but they used not all to be in Cobbett's time, nor for years afterwards. One woman at least I know who, as a girl, helped her mother at making the now obsolete smock-frocks of the rustic labourers. True it is she did not always work directly for the wearers of these garments. Sometimes her orders were given, and her work was distributed, by a local shopkeeper; yet it is significant that the middleman was obliged to come to the village for the skill which he exploited in the interests of the village. It is not unsafe to assume that the work, then becoming specialised, had once been a familiar accomplishment in every village, if not in every house of it.

As with the labourer's clothes, so it is to a large extent with his food. Every year he is less and less able to produce for his own consumption. Not half a century ago, when flour was twice its present price, in this West Surrey parish it was a common thing for the cottage people to grow wheat in their gardens, often in quantity enough to keep them in bread for the winter. The seed was carefully 'dibbed,' the young corn kept well hoed; and, harvested and threshed by hand, the crop was taken to the mill for grinding. Nor did the self-help end here. Every third cottage had its bread-oven, where the neighbours were allowed to bake their own loaves; and it was only last year that recollections of the deliciousness of this bread were stirred in several aged memories by the demolition of one such oven. There are not many others left; and few people would know how to use them if there were. That trouble—that pain or that delightful occupation, whichever it was—the labourer and his wife are relieved of it all. The baker's shop is brought to the cottage door, and the man need not grow corn nor the woman make bread. And their children may go to school and study the science of botany and the art of modelling in clay, since the need for learning how to be useful has grown so small.

Truly it is a great alteration for seventy years to have made. But it is not yet quite complete. A considerable number of cottagers still keep their own pigs and produce some at least of their own pork. Yet this industry is vanishing rapidly. I think there is no bacon cured in this parish; I doubt if the appliances for it exist any more, or if the art is remembered; but I am sure that ever-increasing quantities of bacon are brought into the village from the shops of the neighbouring town. And hence—a curious and blessed change!—the peace of Sunday morning is rarely disturbed now, as too often it used to be only ten years since—by the shrieks of pigs whose noses were being ‘rung.’ Pigs are scarce in the village, and the old man who at twopence a pig found his Sunday morning work more profitable than the hop-ground digging of any weekday has nearly lost that part of his occupation.

What, then, is the situation visible to us to-day? Those symptoms of change, which Cobbett so feared, prove to have been the beginnings of a transition of which we now can see well-nigh to the end. We see the division of labour pushed almost as far as it can go, in respect to the country labourer’s home life; and, far from ruining him, it has added immensely to his comforts. Commodities and appliances never enjoyed by his forefathers are at his command. If he can earn his wages at his day’s work, he need do little else, but he may come home and enjoy his time. He hardly even needs to grow his own potatoes. The produce of his garden is not a necessity to him: he is better off with it, but he is not destitute without it. Of course I do not suggest that his state is enviable. He has little chance to save money: his income may cease at the end of any week: a hard winter, an illness, a depression of trade, bring privation to him. So long as he keeps strong, bodily fatigue and coarse living are his portion; in all his life he may never hope to have a holiday; and as he grows old he must be prepared to face the ignominy of the workhouse. But, unless for his own pleasure, he is exempt from all that self-supporting labour to which it was William Cobbett’s wish that he should return. He has nothing to do but to follow his day’s work steadily and receive the price for it. With his wage in his pocket he can get all that he needs for the simple trouble of carrying it home from a shop. And generally he can get it in larger quantity and of better quality than if he were obliged to make the various commodities for himself.

But as we can no longer, with Cobbett, reasonably lament the

departed times, so we may remember that our times too will disappear. Properly speaking, it is not the end of transition, but only the end of one well-marked stage in it that the labourer is now approaching. Transition goes on. And this reflection makes it interesting to observe one change which, though almost unnoticed, has perforce accompanied the alteration in the life of labouring folk. In absolving them from the need of providing for themselves, the 'division of labour' has taken a good deal of the interest out of their lives. The men take a pride in their gardens, the women in their muslin window-curtains; but there is really very little left to them upon which they can plume themselves. The pleasure which rewards the pain of making things is not to be bought at a shop. In this sense, therefore, the labourer has less to live for than of old; and it is wonderful to me that I have only once heard a man complain of life's emptiness. Once it was muttered in my hearing, though not meant for me to hear, 'I don't see the good o' livin'. Nothin' but hard work and trouble all your life—I don't see the good of it.' One would expect oftener to hear such complaints. But, however this may be, it is plain that the labouring classes, nearing the end of a stage in their economic history, are also near the end of a stage in their mental and spiritual history. Their life, once full of trivial interests, is becoming a waste imperfectly filled by the business of earning three or four shillings a day. The same process which has added to their material comforts has deprived them of their old enjoyments. It has swept away their dreadful poverty; it has relieved them of the burden of providing for their own bodily wants; and now they stand vacantly waiting.

Evidently the transition will go on. To return as Cobbett wished to the good old times is not now to be thought of. In its way Arcadia is all very well; but, after all, it is a waste of time, a waste of life, to be brewing one's own beer, baking one's own bread, mending boots and milking cows and curing bacon for one's self. It would be a nuisance, an intolerable obstruction to living, to be under the necessity of following these pursuits in addition to the day's labour: it is only as a hobby that they can any longer be countenanced. While the labourer still practised them, they gratified perhaps his feeling for being skilful; but, occupying his attention, they left his mind childlike, unconscious, unimaginative. Doubtless they influenced him for his good; yet his world was narrowed down to their restricted horizon, and they were too insistent to allow his character to unfold. They are

gone at last, however ; and when their place begins to be filled with wider, more conscious enjoyments, a new stage of the transition will have opened.

One hears of attempts to inaugurate the new era. There are village art exhibitions ; there are little guilds of artists, full of intense purpose to plant the arts and crafts in the labourer's life. A kind of æsthetic Cobbettism marks some of these amiable movements ; but to all of them those who know the labourer may extend some admiring compassion. Above all things the labourer despises pretentiousness or preciosity ; and, whatever else he may sigh for, he is little likely to take home to himself the dilettantism of our latter-day art. And yet in some tortuous way these things may help him, for the present situation can hardly endure. Though there is no further advantage for the labouring folk in producing commodities for their own consumption, yet to refrain from doing anything else is not enough. That, however, is the existing position. The old unconscious pleasures are over ; their room is vacant for conscious and imaginative ones ; and until something more helpful appears, there is no harm in encouraging the people to toy innocently with æsthetics as artists do.

GEORGE BOURNE.



## *Wild Wheat.*

BY M. E. FRANCIS (MRS. FRANCIS BLUNDELL),  
AUTHOR OF 'FIANDER'S WIDOW,' 'THE MANOR FARM,'  
'LYCHGATE HALL,' ETC.

### CHAPTER III.

#### A WAYSIDE SHRINE.

FOR two whole days Peter strove by every means in his power to obtain some glimpse of the lady of his heart, but his attempts were fruitless. In vain did he loiter about the barred gateway of the Croft; in vain did he reconnoitre the least defended portion of the wall; in vain did he trespass on Miss Manvers' property to the extent of revisiting the spot where he had first met her cousin. He was rewarded by not so much as a gleam of Nathalie's light dress, not so much as a distant echo of her voice.

What was more remarkable still was that no one in the neighbourhood seemed to concern himself about her. Her arrival was not even a three-days' wonder. Vague and unsatisfactory answers were returned to the artful queries with which he plied the village folk. Yes, he was told, there was some talk of a visitor at the Croft. A lady? Ah, sure, there was them what said 'twas a lady; but she hadn't been seen by nobody, and she wouldn't be like to stay there so very long. Had Maister Peter heard that the pigs down to Denny's had got the fever? 'Twas a terrible pity for the poor man, sure. The inspector had been there, and—

But at this vital stage of the discourse Peter turned away.

Godfrey and his mother seemed also to have lost all interest in the astonishing event which the former had been the first to announce. Mrs. Hounsell talked of such matters as the purchase of guinea-fowl and the whitewashing of the attics; Godfrey responded with a few brief details as to the condition of the

wheat in the twenty-acre and the working of the new mowing-machine.

Once, indeed, Peter nerved himself to ask his brother if he had heard anything more of Miss Manvers' visitor, and Godfrey merely shook his head, while his mother, fixing her youngest-born with an amazed stare, inquired what on earth his face was so red for, and wasn't it time for him to give up choking over his food? Thereupon Peter pushed back his chair and left the table in dudgeon; for the throes of first love are apt to make a man childish.

On the third morning it chanced that business took him to Branston, and he rode forth on his handsome thoroughbred mare, Tess; but instead of turning at once in the direction of the market-town he struck off by a bridle-path which led directly to the park wall of the Croft.

It was as yet early enough for the heat to be bearable, yet the drowsy hush of summer-time seemed to brood upon the land. The cattle stood, wherever they could, knee-deep in pond or stream, or else lay lazily in a pasture more lush and richly green than had been seen for many a year. The air was heavy with the scent of clover and meadow-sweet. The birds were silent, but the grasshoppers kept up a concert of their own, though the humming of the bees was well-nigh loud enough to drown it. A distant clatter of a mowing-machine conjured up visions of strenuous labour, which made Peter enjoy the more by contrast his ride along the shady lane, between high banks jewelled, as it seemed, with a thousand flowers. The hedgerow, more beautiful now than even in early spring, was gay with wild rose and honeysuckle, while the long green tendrils of traveller's-joy were already studded with half-opened buds like tiny pearls, that here and there in favoured places had expanded into creamy blossom.

Peter took in all these impressions more vaguely than was his wont; he rode along like a man in a dream, his preoccupation soon becoming apparent to Tess. The mare had not been out for a day or two, and was consequently in high spirits, which demonstrated themselves by an affectation of extreme ticklishness when a fly alighted on her shining flank, and a paroxysm of nervous terror when a leaf fluttered to the ground. Finding that these tactics were disregarded by her master, she tried the effect of a series of buck-jumps which would have rendered the retaining of his seat a matter of difficulty to a less accomplished rider.

Peter collected his scattered wits and laughed aloud.

'You beauty!' he cried, clapping Tess on the neck.

His whole attention was, perforce, engaged, and it was not until Tess, after a final rush, settled down to a kind of sidling canter that he raised his eyes to the coping-stones of that tall wall along which they had of late so often travelled; and then his long patience was rewarded all at once, for there, some nine feet above the ground, looking down on him from an arch of greenery, was the lady of his dreams. She was sitting in the forked bough of an old beech-tree, as snugly ensconced as though in a niche, her delicate little face, with its aureole of fair hair, standing out from the shadow of the overhanging leaves with a curious effect. The wall upon which she was leaning was in deep shade, and she, with her pale colouring and white dress, looked by contrast almost ethereal. To Peter's lovesick fancy she seemed a thing of light; and he was suddenly reminded of a picture he had seen somewhere long ago—of a foreign shrine set high in an old wall, whence the form of the Madonna looked out transfigured upon the world.

Quaintly benign was this madonna of the beech-tree as she smiled down at Peter, when, with throbbing heart, he reined up beneath her niche. Not a word could he find to say; but at length she broke the silence:

'I think all your animals are wild and naughty. How your horse pranced just now!'

'Did you see it?' said Peter, secretly well pleased, for, though no coxcomb, he knew that during Tess's recent antics he had carried himself well.

'Yes; I wondered you were able to keep on.'

Peter could not resist the temptation of secretly tickling the mare afresh, an attention to which she responded by shooting up into the air in a somewhat alarming fashion. The rose with which Peter had adorned his buttonhole fell upon the ground, but otherwise he seemed quite unaffected by the occurrence. As he now wished to enjoy a little quiet conversation, he presented the end of his riding-cane to Tess, who caught at it with her teeth and forthwith became lamb-like.

'Your rose—see, you have lost your rose!' cried the girl eagerly. 'Don't let your horse tread on it, it is such a beauty.'

Peter quickly dismounted and picked up the rose.

'It is not hurt,' he said. He gazed at the flower, then diffidently at the girl, then back at the flower. He raised his arm impulsively, but, his heart failing him, stopped midway. Miss

Manvers, perceiving his intention, smiled kindly, and, leaning over the parapet, stretched down her hand.

‘I can’t reach it,’ she said.

In a moment Peter was in the saddle again, with his arm outstretched to its fullest extent. She took the rose, twirled it in her fingers, smelt it, and, after a little hesitation, fastened it amid the laces of her dress.

‘I love flowers,’ she said.

Peter’s eyes were fixed on the rose; it was a deep red one. Red was the colour of love, he told himself, and she had placed it there, near her heart.

‘Don’t you want to know how I come to find myself on this perch?’ she asked, after a pause. ‘It is because I was stifling down there,’ indicating, with one of her quick, un-English gestures, the enclosure behind the wall. ‘I felt as if I were in prison.’

‘I thought you would,’ answered Peter.

‘Yes; I felt I must have just one look at the world. One must feel much more free on your side of the wall. Who lives in that curious old house over there with the twisted chimneys?’

‘We do,’ said Peter; ‘my mother, and brother, and myself.’ Then, obeying a sudden impulse, he looked her full in the face. ‘That house is ours,’ he said, ‘those woods are ours, that land for almost as far as you can see is all ours; but—I feel I ought to tell you—we—we are not gentlefolk.’ The admission cost him so much that he turned white, and his head swam; but conquering the weakness he met the girl’s curious gaze firmly. ‘I am not a gentleman,’ said Peter.

There was a dead pause, and at length his eyes, which, though they had been fixed on her face, had scarce distinguished its features, resumed their normal function. He saw that she was smiling.

‘Why do you tell me this?’ asked she.

‘Because,’ said Peter, ‘meeting me as you did, you made a mistake. You thought we were equals—you treated me like an equal. I thought you ought to know.’

‘If you had not told me,’ said she, with that gay and delicious upward curve of the lip which never failed to thrill him, ‘if you had not told me, I should certainly not have guessed—that you were not a gentleman.’

The relief was so great that again Peter whitened beneath his bronze; his lip quivered, his eyes looked unutterable things; and again he saw a faint flush overspread her face. She began to speak very lightly and rapidly.

'So that is your house? Well, it is a very pretty one. And what is that house there?'

'That is the Rectory,' returned Peter. 'The Rector was my first schoolmaster. He lends me books still, and helps me.'

'Ah,' said Miss Manvers, carelessly, as though determined not to display too much interest in Peter's personal concerns. 'And is that a village there?'

'Yes; that is the village of Chudbury.'

'Are there no towns—no real towns? I like towns. I like places where there are lots of people.'

'Dorchester lies over there—about six miles away; and Branston is yonder' (pointing with his whip), 'six miles in the other direction. They are small towns, both of them.'

She sighed discontentedly.

'Are there no larger towns within reach?'

'There is Weymouth, not so very far away; and Bourne—Bournemouth, I mean. A great many people come there in the winter; it is a fashionable place.'

'Ah,' said Miss Manvers wistfully; then, after a pause, 'I don't suppose I shall ever be allowed to go there. My cousin tells me she has not been outside her gates for nearly thirty years. Is not that dreadful to think of? Thirty years shut up here among these trees!'

'The trees are well enough,' said Peter, resenting her contemptuous tone, he scarcely knew why. 'If I had to be shut up anywhere, I'd as soon it was among trees. I wonder you are so fond of towns,' he added, almost reproachfully.

'Oh, I like life—life!' she cried, throwing out her hands. 'To be in touch with the world, to meet one's fellow-creatures! But there is no use in talking about it. My fate will be to live here always—to grow old, and dull, and ugly behind these walls—never to pass the gates except on Sundays.'

'Sundays! Then Miss Manvers has given you leave to go to church?' interrupted Peter eagerly.

She looked at him in some surprise, and with that momentary stiffening which he had noticed once or twice before when his tone had grown over-familiar.

'I beg your pardon,' he hastened to murmur, much abashed. 'I only thought I might show you the short way over the Downs.'

'Yes, my cousin has given me leave,' said the girl, accepting his apology and becoming once more gracious. 'I should be glad

if you would show me the short way, for I must bicycle. Her horses are never taken out on Sunday, my cousin says.'

Peter made a valiant effort to suppress his delight, and partially succeeded.

'There is one bad bit of road,' he said, 'but the rest is pretty good, and you save a lot by going across the Downs. See, you take this path to the right, and then cut straight across by the woods. 'Tis beautiful going, over the short grass, and downhill for a good bit, and there's a grand view all the way.'

She smiled faintly at his enthusiasm, but presently shot a curious glance at his eager, uplifted face.

'Do you know I had a misfortune the other day?' said she, with apparent irrelevance. 'I lost my handkerchief in the wood yonder. I remember slipping it through your dog's collar. I thought about it when I had gone a little way, and went back to look for it, but could not find it. Could I have left it in the dog's collar?'

'No,' said Peter, flushing guiltily. 'It was on the ground. I—I found it.'

'Why did you not give it back to me? You must have guessed it was mine.'

Peter gave a slight kick to Tess, and said, 'Whoa, mare!' Then he glanced up at the little lady, and, meeting her severe gaze, dropped his eyes again.

'I should like to have it back,' said she. 'It belonged to my dear mother.'

'I saw the name,' said Peter, 'and the little crown. I wondered if they belonged to you.'

'The name is mine,' said the girl. 'I am called Nathalie, like her; but I suppose I have no right to the coronet. My mother was a Countess Offrossimoff.'

'Nathalie,' repeated Peter, meditatively, 'Nathalie! It is a pretty name.' Then he looked up suddenly. 'My name is Peter Hounsell,' he said.

'I cannot say I think that pretty,' returned Nathalie, with a faint smile; 'but it is a good name, I daresay.'

'Yes,' said Peter stoutly; 'it's a good name—a good, honest name. The Hounsells have always held up their heads and looked the world in the face.'

'When are you going to return my handkerchief?' inquired Nathalie abruptly.



Peter's hand moved involuntarily towards his breast, and then dropped again.

'Some day,' he said confusedly.

The action was not lost upon Nathalie, but she forbore to seek an elucidation of it.

'You must not forget about it,' she said. 'I have only a few things that belonged to my mother. Good-bye, Mr. Hounsell.'

'Are you going?' inquired Peter naïvely.

'No; but you are, are you not? You must not try your horse's patience too much, though it seems more quiet since you gave it the stick to nibble at.'

'I learnt that trick from a trainer,' said the young man. 'Race-horses are ticklish beasts, but I've seen the most fidgety of 'em quiet down when they give 'em a stick to bite at. My mare is thoroughbred,' he added proudly.

But though Nathalie smiled graciously, she was not to be inveigled into further conversation. She withdrew a little further into the shelter of the leaves, and gave Peter a nod of dismissal. He had now no further excuse for loitering, and, raising his hat, rode reluctantly away. He put Tess to a canter presently, and as her feet fell rhythmically on the springy turf they seemed to beat out the name *Nathalie! Nathalie! Nathalie!*

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## CHAPTER IV.

### THE PILGRIM.

OLD Abel Nash, Mrs. Hounsell's cowman, paused, as he sauntered towards the yard-gate in search of his sleek, heavy-footed charges, to stare through the little wicket over the way that led to the garden. It was very early—Abel was generally the first to be astir, and he had only just finished his 'dew-bit'—yet someone was already moving about the grassy paths of the enclosure. Abel closed the gate noiselessly and stepped across the lane. A man's figure was wandering about among the irregular, old-fashioned beds, stooping every now and then to cull a bloom, which he added to the cluster in his hand.

'Well, I never!' ejaculated Abel under his breath. 'If it bain't Peter. 'Tis a queer thing for sich as he to go a-gatherin' posies this time o' marnin'.'

So much astonished was Abel that he forgot all about the cows for the nonce, and, propping himself against the ivy-grown archway, stared and ruminated as though there was no such thing in the world as milking-time.

Presently Deb, the dairywoman, came sauntering up from the village in the 'dip,' tying the strings of her apron as she advanced.

'Be that you, Abel?' she cried, somewhat indistinctly, because the pins destined in course of time to fasten up her bib were now carried for greater security in her mouth, but with intense astonishment in every line of her face. 'Dear, to be sure! Haven't ye started for the mead yet?'

Abel made cabalistic signs with his horny hand, and cried 'Hush, 'ooman!' under his breath as she drew near.

'Whatever's the matter?' exclaimed Deb, taking the pins out of her mouth and breaking into a run.

'Look—see!' whispered Abel, jerking his thumb towards the unconscious Peter, who had now reached the farthest end of the garden, and whose nosegay had assumed enormous proportions.

'Maister Peter!' ejaculated Deb; then—'What be he a-doin' of?'

'Can't ye see?' responded the old man, with a smothered chuckle. 'He be a-pickin' of a posy. He've a-started early enough, ha'n't he?'

Deb gazed in round-eyed wonder, first at Abel and then at Peter, who, with one foot propped against the crumbling buttress of the wall so that his flowery trophy rested on his knee, was now tying it securely into a bunch.

'It bain't gone five yet,' she whispered; then, peeping through the gate, with ever deepening interest, "'Tis a blue ribbon what he be a-tyin' it up wi'. It do look like courtin', Abel, don't it?'

'It do,' agreed Abel, unctuously. "'Tis for some maid, so sure as we be alive.'

'Well, but who can it be?' cogitated Deb. 'Peter there, he never were knowed to look at a maid, and he never do walk out wi' nobody, an' he do come marchin' out o' church o' Sundays wi'out so much as turnin' his head.'

'Well, he've a-made a start at last, I d' 'low,' chuckled Abel.

'I wonder who it can be,' murmured Deb again. 'There, he be comin' now; we'd best be off. He be a queer young chap, and a terr'ble one for keepin' hisself to hisself.'

Abel, taking the hint, set forth in search of his cows, while Deb strolled negligently towards the dairy.

By-and-by, Peter, having fastened the ribbon in such a knot as could only be achieved by male fingers, emerged from the garden, drawing his brows together slightly at sight of Deb's vanishing form. She, good woman, was apparently too intent on the pinning up of her large bib to bestow any attention on her young master, though it is possible that out of the corner of her eye she took note of the flush upon his face and the involuntary impulse, promptly checked, to hide his flowers. He disappeared within the stable, and from her ambush in the dairy Deb saw him presently lead forth Tess, mount her, and ride off, the nosegay stowed away in the crook of his arm. Deb set down the pail she had been scouring and hastened to the yard gate; the horse and rider were already disappearing.

'Tis Crayford way,' said Deb, and nodded to herself. She went back to her task ruminating. Who could be the maid? She knew of no likely damsels in that direction. The parson of Chudbury had a 'vitty' daughter, it was true, but she was too old for Maister Peter, and young Farmer Drury's sister was walking out with a fine young man from Bourne, and the bailiff's daughter at the Croft—but she'd be no match for the like of a Hounsell.

'I'm puzzled,' said Deb, 'puzzled! That's what I be.'

Meanwhile Peter had ridden briskly off to Crayford, and only halted when he had reached the exact spot whence his madonna had yesterday looked forth at him. The shrine was empty, as he had expected, and, quickly dismounting, he tied up Tess to a tree, and prepared to scale the wall. It was a matter of some difficulty, but he achieved it at last. Now to place his offering so that it should be unseen by the chance passer-by, yet immediately evident to the lady for whom it was destined. At last he arranged the great, dewy, sweet-scented bunch to his satisfaction, and, rapidly withdrawing, returned home.

All that day he thought over what he had done. Would she be angry? Would she be pleased? Surely she would be pleased. She had shown that she liked flowers; she would not despise a gift so reverently offered. With an effort he kept himself from revisiting the spot. He would not have her think he wanted to be thanked; he would not impose himself upon her too often.

But, at dawn next day, he rode forth again, unable to resist the temptation of ascertaining if she had accepted this humble tribute, and carried it away with her. With trembling hands he made fast the mare as before, and once more ascended the wall. Alas! there lay his flowers exactly as he had placed them; not one dis-

arranged, their beauty gone, the scent of the wilted blossoms heavy, scarcely sweet. She had not touched them. Had she even glanced at them? Had she been there at all? Peter scanned the spot with eager eyes. It seemed to him that she had been there. A little branch was broken, and hung by a filament of bark between the niche and the road; perhaps it was intended as a screen. Looking more closely, he saw clinging to some of the bent twigs, which still seemed to bear the impress of her light weight, a thread or two of embroidery silk. She had been working, then. She had sat there at her ease without so much as a glance at the flowers which he had thought would give her such pleasure. He snatched them up and slid quickly to the ground again. With a muttered curse he tore his carefully arranged nosegay apart and threw the withered flowers, together with the ribbon which had bound them, on the dusty road. She should see for herself that he had been there, and that he was angry.

All that day he nursed his wrath, vowing that he would think no more of Nathalie, and thinking of nothing else; and on the morrow, choosing the same hour as that at which he had first beheld her in her beech tree, he set forth on foot. The flowers still lay in the road, but the green niche was empty. He had scared her away.

Then Peter bitterly reproached himself. What right had he to force himself upon her, to pester her with his clumsy attentions, to forget the gulf that separated them? Her refusal of his gift had been a hint that he was going too far, and, instead of humbly submitting, he had acted in a manner which was almost insulting. No wonder he had frightened her; no wonder he had driven her back to the depths of her green prison.

Luckily the next day was Sunday; Nathalie would be obliged to come abroad. Peter could seize this opportunity of meeting her; he would apologise for his recent violence, and would promise never to intrude upon her again. His heart sank even as he formed the resolution, but he resolved to adhere to it. Better, far better, never to see her than to be stung by the consciousness that his presence was unwelcome.

At a suitable hour on the following morning, therefore, he lay in wait for Nathalie on the Downs, taking up his position just where the bad bit of road began, and where he knew she would be obliged to dismount. He waited with sickening impatience till at last the little figure came in sight, but even then did not venture to present himself till Nathalie had safely alighted.

She looked up in alarm as he stepped out from the copse, and an expression of surprised displeasure overspread her face.

'Miss Manvers,' began Peter, 'I have not come to intrude myself upon you. I merely wish to apologise for the liberty which I took the other day. I—I—am deeply ashamed and sorry.'

She glanced at him timidly from under the brim of her hat; it was the hat with the white ribbons of which Godfrey had spoken.

'You are not angry any more?' said she.

'No,' responded Peter, catching his breath; 'but—but I suppose you are, are you not?'

As she looked at him hesitatingly he continued eagerly:

'I know it was wrong. I know I shouldn't have forgotten myself as I did; but I promise you I won't come near the place any more if—if you don't like.'

She smiled a small enigmatical smile to herself, and began to walk on, propelling her bicycle before her.

'Mayn't I push your machine for you?' asked Peter, very humbly. 'The road is so rough.'

As he laid his hand on the saddle she removed hers.

'It is very rough,' she agreed, 'and I am late already.'

They walked along in silence till they reached the top of the ascent, and then Peter held the bicycle while Nathalie mounted.

'It is smooth going for the most part now,' he said, 'and you can't miss the way. Right across by the edge of the wood, do you see? And then down to the left.'

'Thank you,' said Nathalie, with a little nod, as she sped away.

Peter stood looking after the small, flying figure, his ideas in an odd jumble, yet dominated by a vague elation. She had not said that she forgave him, but she had not forbidden him to come again; indeed, she had scarcely seemed to hear that somewhat rash promise of his. And she had accepted his assistance without a murmur—she was even glad of it. He turned and examined the road up which he had pushed her bicycle.

'It certainly is rough,' he said aloud, repeating her words. He would do well, he thought, to wait and help her again on her return journey.

Peter was a good churchman. Never in all his life, perhaps, had he been known to miss the morning service in the little, ivy-grown church in the hollow. The bell was jangling out its summons now. His mother and Godfrey would have already set forth, his mother looking about her as she went, probably, and wondering

what had become of him. But if he went to church this morning he would miss Nathalie.

After a moment's pause he turned back towards the wood, and throwing himself upon the mossy ground beneath the shade of the sapling oaks he fell into a muse, his eyes wandering, meanwhile, over the wide expanse in front of him. The sunlit Downs stretched away in gentle slopes, the golden green of the short grass studded with wild flowers—here a patch of bugles, there a tuft of toad-flax; crowfoot visible everywhere, its tiny flame recalling the extinct fires of the gorse. There were wild roses still in bloom; the perfume of honeysuckle mingled with the wilder, more characteristic fragrance of thyme. A richly cultivated and undulating country dropped ever downwards to the river, and beyond were more fields, more woods, and farther away a blue chain of hills.

'Tis a grand view,' muttered Peter to himself; 'there's not its like in England.'

He wondered if Nathalie had ever seen anything more beautiful in foreign lands. He would ask her that very morning if he had a chance. She might halt for at least a moment to enjoy the view; she might even sit down and rest on this self-same mossy bank. Peter began instinctively to clear away such fallen twigs and dry leaves as came within reach of his arm. He tested the moss; it was soft and springy, fit for a queen to sit on, he thought. It was deliciously shady here, yet the spot was open to the breezes, and one could see all that was to be seen for miles and miles.

Was that a wild strawberry over there? Peter rose to his feet and investigated the little ruby drop. Yes, there were several of them under that guelder bush; there would probably be quantities further in the wood. Picking a large leaf he explored the depths of the copse, and emerged after a time with quite a little pile of the woodland fruit. Going back to the spot which he had selected, he placed the leaf at the foot of the tree, and then, dropping into his former place, abandoned himself to waiting and dreaming.

That hour was one of the happiest of his life. Expectancy was as yet bliss; his ardour, instead of being checked as he had anticipated, had received a distinct impetus; the ball of life lay at his feet, it seemed to him—everything was possible since Nathalie, the queen of his fancy, had looked back at him with that arch smile.

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## CHAPTER V.

## ON THE DOWNS.

PETER scarcely knew how it happened ; he thought his eyes had been fixed immovably on the particular opening between the furze-bushes whence he expected Nathalie's small figure to emerge ; but he must have glanced away for a moment, for all at once he saw her coming from quite another point. She was pushing her bicycle along a sheep-track a little to the left of the clump aforesaid, and walked slowly, as if weary.

In a moment he was on his feet and hastening to her side, detecting with rapture a distinct look of pleasure on her face as she caught sight of him.

'Oh,' she cried ; and letting go the bicycle, she allowed it to tumble down, 'oh, you are there still ! I am so glad ; perhaps you will help me a little. I am so tired !'

'A puncture ?' inquired Peter, as he picked up the bicycle. She looked at him blankly.

'I don't know,' she answered ; 'I think a stone must have made a little hole in this indiarubber outside part—the tyre, do you call it ? It got quite flat all of a sudden, and I couldn't go on. I have had to push this thing such a long way, and there are so many paths, I thought I should lose myself.'

Peter meanwhile was examining the bicycle.

'It is a puncture, of course,' he said, 'but I think I could blow up this tyre so that you could at least ride home. You have a pump here, I see. I will walk beside you and blow up the tyre again if it gets flat. But won't you sit down for a moment or two first, and rest ? It is beautifully shady over there in the wood.'

Nathalie sighed and looked round ; she was hot and exhausted, and there was not a soul in sight.

'I think I must,' she said, speaking rather to herself than to Peter.

'There is a mossy bank yonder,' cried he, leading the way eagerly. 'It is nice and cool—there is quite a breeze up here ; and see what a view there is !'

Nathalie turned round, sweeping a vague glance over the Downs and the fertile valley beneath ; then she sighed again, and dropped down on the mossy seat which Peter proudly indicated.

'It is very nice,' she said, 'and most refreshing after my hot

walk. But what a lonely place ! *Bon Dieu !* Are there no people in this country ?'

Peter stood looking down at her, vaguely disappointed.

'I met on the road,' pursued Nathalie, 'one carriage—a farmer's carriage, I think—it had only two wheels, and there was a fat woman inside with such a bonnet ! And in the church there were only peasants—quite a few, and all poor.'

Peter considered her gravely.

'Would you have prayed better if the church had been full of ladies and gentlemen ?' he asked.

Nathalie laughed.

'Of course not ! But I should like to feel I was not quite, quite cut off from my kind. Who could be interested in peasants ?'

A little discontented pucker showed itself between her brows.

'Since I came to Crayford,' she continued, 'I have not spoken to a single creature except my cousin—and you !'

'And I don't count, of course,' said Peter bitterly ; 'I am not a gentleman.'

The frown vanished, and Nathalie looked at him with curiosity and even a certain interest.

'You insist on that point always ; yet you speak like a gentleman—a country gentleman,' she added, correcting herself ; 'and you—I should think you had been well educated.'

'In a sort of a way—yes,' admitted Peter.

'Sit down,' said Nathalie imperatively. 'You are so tall, I have to bend back my head a long way to look at you. I want you to explain——'

She broke off suddenly, as on changing her position her eyes fell on the wild strawberries.

'Why, what is this ?' she cried. 'Look—look ! They are Swiss strawberries !'

'No, I picked them just now in the wood. I thought you might be tired and thirsty after your ride in the heat.'

'You picked them for me ?'

He nodded, dropping cautiously down on the bank at a little distance from her.

'But you could not know I would stop here ? You could not guess that my wheel would—what do you call it—puncture ?'

'I meant to push back your bicycle for you in any case,' said Peter nervously, for he was not sure that she was pleased, 'and I thought I would ask you first to rest here a little and look at the view.'

She looked doubtful for a moment, but presently smiled.

'And meanwhile you provided some refreshment? Thank you; that was very thoughtful of you.'

He could not quite make out if she spoke in mockery or not, but felt relieved when he saw her begin to eat the strawberries.

She grimaced as she swallowed the first.

'Bah! how sour they are! But I like them—they remind me of—of all sorts of things.'

'They taste of the wood, don't they?' cried Peter eagerly. 'If I were to eat a wild strawberry anywhere with my eyes shut, I should think of the wood, and the smell of the moss, and the rustling of the leaves, and the hum of the bees. I never taste heather honey without thinking of the moor as I used to see it when I was a child, a great big heath stretching away dark, almost black—and so silent except for the bees and the birds.'

'Oh, it is silent enough, all your country!' exclaimed Nathalie. 'I like these strawberries because they remind me of more cheerful times—when I used to travel and see many lands and many people. I think of big bustling hotels, where heaps of these things were served up with cinnamon and whipped cream. I seem to hear the voices round me and the band playing; that is better than the droning of your bees. And I think of walks in pleasant company—'

She broke off suddenly and pushed away the leaf which she had drawn towards her.

'These are not really like the Alpine strawberries,' she cried petulantly. 'They are hard, sour things that have never known the sun.'

Peter said nothing, and presently she turned to him, more gently.

'I want you to explain,' she said, 'explain to me a little about yourself, and why you say you are not a gentleman.'

'I must be what my father was,' said he, 'must not I?'

'Not of a necessity,' she replied.

'He was a yeoman,' went on Peter. 'He spoke as broad Dorset as any of the country folk; he never had any education, and never wanted any. He did not want us—my brother and I—to be educated either, but we had some schooling, and the Rector taught me a bit, and I've read a lot. My mother comes of an old family and calls herself a lady, but I don't want to set up for being better than I am—a farmer and a poor man to boot.'

'Why, how can that be,' asked Nathalie, 'since that fine house and all that land is yours?'

There was no mistaking the interest in her eyes now, and Peter, much flattered, and more than ever drawn to her, needed no pressing to relate the grievance which always lay so heavy on his heart.

'It is almost more than a man can bear,' he summed up; 'yet here I am tied by the leg. Oh, there are times when I feel I would rather go out as a day-labourer than live as I do. Do you see that white road winding over there?'

She nodded.

'I can see it from my window,' pursued Peter. 'There are times when I am nearly distracted with looking at it, and longing to find myself upon it—a free man. That road would carry me out into the world, I say, to myself—out into the big, free world where I could stand on my own feet and live my own life!'

'Don't!' cried Nathalie, throwing out her hand suddenly, 'don't! Out into the world, my God! The great busy world! Let us not talk of it—let us not look at the road any more. We shall go mad!'

Peter glanced at her, startled. Her face was momentarily convulsed; there was a curious fire in her blue eyes.

'There might be something over there,' she murmured, half to herself, 'something, somebody; and here—nothing—nothing!'

Meeting Peter's pained and shocked gaze she smiled faintly, and sprang to her feet.

'Well, it is time to go back,' she said.

Peter rose, too, and began to wheel the bicycle down the slope. He was wounded, and not a little angry. He had been beguiled into confiding his troubles to this girl, and they appeared to have evoked no sympathy. His words had, on the contrary, thrown her back upon herself, and stirred up within her some unknown depth of purely personal feeling. Then to be told over and over again that he was of no account, as she had done in so many words.

'I have spoken to nobody except my cousin—and you. Out there one might find something, somebody; here there is nothing.'

And Peter was here, and not out there!

He strode along in front of her, the bicycle bumping mercilessly when they came to the stony bit of road. He scarcely heeded the patter of Nathalie's light feet behind him, but all at once he felt her touch upon his arm.

'Mr. Hounsell, there are worse troubles in the world than yours. You, at least, are dependent only on your own people—those who love you. You can feel that you have a right to all that is theirs;

but I—I am living on the bounty of a stranger—I am at the mercy of her whims ; I eat the bread of charity that may at any time be withheld. And this is to be my life for always.'

'Not always,' blurted out Peter. 'I—it is my earnest hope that one day——' He broke off, confused.

'What do you mean ?'

He could see the stiffness he had learnt to dread coming over her, and pulled himself together, his brain reeling at the thought of what he had so nearly said.

'I mean—it can't be for always,' he stammered, and forthwith began to trundle the bicycle down the hill at an amazing rate.

She followed more sedately, and by the time she had reached the bottom found that Peter had plied the pump so manfully that it was possible for her to pursue her way.

'Good-bye,' she said as she mounted.

'Hadn't I better come with you in case it wants pumping up again ?' he asked.

'No, thank you ; I can get on by myself now.'

Peter took off his hat and fell back ; and Nathalie set off without, this time, turning her head. Peter followed at a safe distance, and presently, on turning the lane, observed that she had alighted and was again pushing her bicycle. She might possibly have been glad of his renewed services with the pump, but he was too diffident, and, possibly, also too much piqued, to offer them.

*(To be continued.)*

## *At the Sign of the Ship.*

LAST month I wailed over the lack of new novels readable by an old-fashioned student. In an excellent contemporary, there is a compartment reserved for notices of really good books, styled 'On the Line.' Last month 'On the Line' was hung a new historical novel, a thing of rare merit, full of adventures of loyal cavaliers. I do not name the novel, not being desirous of standing in the way of a new writer; but it was dreadfully disappointing. The tale begins during the march of Charles II. to Worcester, a most picturesque affair in fact; for the cavaliers in their letters represent themselves as laughing at their own certain ruin. Among them was Sir Thomas Urquhart, who thought the opportunity good for carrying a book of his own, in MS., to London, to his publisher. But the leaves of manuscript were all tossed about the streets of Worcester after the battle, and Noll's soldiers lighted their pipes with them, to the sorrow of the translator of Rabelais.

\* \* \*

Then there was jolly Sir James Turner, who was taken prisoner, but refused to give his parole, escaped over the roofs into an empty house, and calmly walked to London disguised as a bargee, with a crew of Oxford bargees even more devoted to liquor than himself. He strolled through guarded companies of his captured comrades, made himself comfortable in town, and devised half-a-dozen ways of rescuing Middleton from prison, in which he succeeded. We have also that 'very beautiful person,' so described by Clarendon, young Wogan, who, with 300 horse, cut a path to safety for Charles II., through Cromwell's troopers. So Sir Charles Wogan told Dean Swift, though no historian (bar one) mentions the circumstance. With such materials in hand, the first that occur to my memory, I did expect a good old-fashioned tale, but found an unfortunate plot, a Scottish secondary hero without a touch of the Scot about him, and such artless remarks as this, by a cavalier: 'I was away, enjoying the pleasure of the chase' (he enjoyed them



with a gun !). Again, 'it was my ill-fortune to be embroiled in a rough-and-tumble in the streets.' They did not talk of 'rough-and-tumble,' in 1650, and at no period is 'galley-weaned strength' an appropriate or intelligible phrase. A life in the galleys is here supposed to nourish strength ; but to wean is not to nourish. It is a pity to put a very ordinary attempt at historical fiction 'On the Line,' and on a pedestal. One is not trapped by the indiscriminate panegyrics of the ladies and gentlemen who review batches of fiction in the newspapers.

'The carpenter said nothing but  
"The butter's spread too thick."'

But one may be beguiled when the critic seems, and no doubt is, quite in earnest.

\* \* \*

I am not tempted either by a novel called *Major Weir*. Scott's friend, Erskine, put the case of Major Weir in the least exaggerated way when he said that 'the Major was not a gentlemanly person.' A reviewer speaks of 'the terrible chalk-line drawn through the living-room in which brother' (the Major) 'and sister led their hard lives of gloomy antagonism.' The Major did *not* draw the line—I do not know where he drew it—and when he was burned, he got no more than he deserved, even if he did not annoy the great Montrose by smoking in the prison cell where the hero was confined. Legend, not history, tells this anecdote of the ungentlemanly Major. The rest may be looked for in 'Satan's Invisible World Disclosed,' by any daring reader.

\* \* \*

The problems of currency are more than metaphysical. 'What is money ?' I know how Aristotle answers the question ; but he is out of date. The queerest money in the world, odder than *assignats*, or carved shells, or cowries, or hatchets, is the stone money of the Isle of Uap, in the Western Caroline Group. There 'free food, and drink, and clothing grow on trees,' says Mr. W. H. Furness, in a learned periodical issued by the University of Pennsylvania. The only thing that a boon Nature does not provide is houses. A good strong house is needed, and to build the house requires labour, and the money of Uap represents labour. 'Labour, in Uap, is to be bought with labour.' The Uap money represents labour, and nothing else. It is not pretty, it is not useful, it is not portable ; at least, if there is much of it ; it consists in stone things like millstones, only bigger, with a round hole, wherein a

pole may be inserted 'to facilitate transportation.' These lumps of stone, which may be six feet high by six feet broad, are brought in canoes from an island 400 miles away. If you are the Mr. Andrew Carnegie of Uap, your wealth may be so large that you cannot get it through the door of your house, and, as it is not a rolling stone (though it is 'circulating medium'), it gathers moss in the open air. The energetic young men have club-houses, and at the doors of their clubs are dumped down the circular lumps of stone which reward their labours.

\* \* \*

If we were as the people of Uap, the area in front of the Authors' Club would be blocked by huge rude millstones, deposited by publishers, as a reward for the labours of the authors. Or even so much as that might not be done in Uap. My publishers, let us say, as men of inordinate wealth, would have a stone of twenty-four feet in diameter lying against the wall in Paternoster Row. I write for them a book involving enormous labour. They then say, 'You see that stone? It is yours.' I do not carry it away (that is not the custom of Uap); I let it lie there. For me it is enough to know that this mass of wealth is mine. My tailor sends in his bill. I tell him, 'You know that *Fei* in Paternoster Row? It is yours.' Pleased with such prompt payment (to which he is unaccustomed), he gives me a receipt, and when the people from whom he buys cloth send in their account, he hands over, orally, the property in the big stone, which still lies against the wall in the Row.

\* \* \*

An enormously rich family in Uap, the Jay-Goulds of the island, have never seen their wealth, nor has any living man. It fell out of a raft into deep waters in the bay, ages ago, but it is *there*, all right, 'as safe as the bank'—safer than some banks. When the Germans annexed the island, they could not fine disorderly chiefs, for the stones were too heavy to carry away. So they marked the stones with a cross in black paint, as German property, and then the natives set to and redeemed them by labour on the new roads. In *The House*, the illustrated annual of the Stock Exchange,<sup>1</sup> edited by Mr. W. H. Morgan, and sold for the benefit of the *Referee's* Children's Dinner Fund—in *The House*, I say, Mr. Arthur Brewin writes a learned article on 'Money.' But he never heard of Uap, its *Fei*, and its primitive political economy.

<sup>1</sup> Gay and Polden.

If the kind reader will buy *The House*, thinking of the children, he will be 'not only charmed, but instructed more,' by Mr. F. T. Bullen, Mr. Jerome K. Jerome ('Celebrities in Hades'), Mr. Pett Ridge, Major Arthur Haggard (tremendous slaughter occurs in *his* yarn), Mr. Barry Pain, Mr. F. Carruthers Gould, Mr. G. R. Sims, the present writer, and many others, while there are scores of illustrations. The price of the book is not indicated; but Mr. Bullen's 'An Author's Morning' is alone well worth the money, whatever it is. The letters which the author receives are my daily fare. Here is a specimen:

' State Prison, Alabama.

' SIR,—I am the Chaplain of this prison, and, in pursuance of a plan I have of elevating the prisoners by moral suasion and mental training, am forming a library. No funds are allocated for this purpose, so I am compelled to appeal to men like yourself, who are able and no doubt willing to contribute some copies of their works for so good an end. I have the less diffidence in appealing to you because you, an Englishman, have made enormous sums out of the sale of your books to the American public, and therefore I feel sure you will be glad of the opportunity of thus showing your gratitude. One copy of each of your works, if you can spare no more, will be thankfully received.

' I am, yours sincerely,

' EZEKIEL B. SNOW, Chaplain.'

Mr. Bullen mentions that the only books of his which had any sale worth mentioning in America are those for which he received 0*l.* 0*s.* 0*d.*, or nuppence, and that 'all his American royalties would not equal those from his worst selling book at home.' However, if the Alabama chaplain thinks that my treatise 'On the Origin of the *Piraungaru* Custom' would raise the moral tone of his flock 'some,' I shall gladly send the work. The custom in question is well thought of by a German missionary, but—here I had better say no more about it. An up-to-date novelist might make a very curious and disgusting romance on the subject.

\* \* \*

The godly of Geneva lately erected a monument to Servetus, who was roasted alive by Calvin at Geneva in October 1553, because Calvin disliked him personally, and thought his theological opinions erroneous. John Knox did not come to Geneva till 1554, and missed the spectacle, which, I believe, was rather lucky for

Calvin. In any case, the difficulty of writing a suitable inscription for the monument was considerable, Calvin being the local hero, while his conduct in this matter would have disgraced the hulks. The inscription runs thus :

Sons  
Respectful and grateful  
Of CALVIN  
Our Great Reformer,  
But condemning an error  
Which was that of his Age  
And Firmly Attached to Liberty  
Of Conscience  
According to the True Principles  
Of the Reformation *and* of the Gospel (!),  
We have stuck up  
This Expiatory Monument.  
*October 27, 1903.*

OCTOBER 27, 1553.  
Died at the stake at Champel

MICHAEL SERVETUS  
Of Villeneuve in Aragon.  
*Born September 29, 1511.*

This is thirteen lines of apology for Calvin, and only five lines for his unhappy victim. As for the principles of the Reformation being those of the Gospel, that is a high old joke ! Where does the Gospel tell you to put to death anybody whose theological opinions are not your own, or say that 'Idolaters must die the death' ? Queen Mary was under Parliamentary sentence of death, in Scotland, as soon as she had heard three Masses in the Chapel Royal. Such were the principles of the Reformation ! As to 'an error of his age,' if Calvin set about restoring Christianity, he ought to have begun by being a Christian. Where does the Gospel tell us to burn second-sighted people ? Nowhere. But as soon as 'the Trew Kirk' was set up in Scotland the tar-barrel was lit for mediums, genuine or fraudulent. Perhaps the people of 'Villeneuve, in Aragon' (where Servetus was not born), will set up a monument to him with a few remarks on Calvin. Monsieur N. Weiss says that Calvin never proved anything against Servetus. He had done nothing at Geneva, and he could have been turned out if he was thought likely to do anything. He was accused of blasphemy,

but his works prove the intensity of his piety. He based his opinions on the Bible, which he had as good a right to interpret for himself as any other man.

\* \* \*

Many authors, if they are aware that this Servetus was a proof-reader by profession, will think that perhaps he read proofs for Calvin, did not correct the errors, did introduce fancy alterations out of his own head, and generally got no more than he deserved. In fact, I daresay that somebody will propose the health of Calvin at an authors' dinner because he burned a proof-reader. I dissociate myself from these extreme views, and condemn the infliction of that form of capital punishment. At the age of twenty, according to the Bishop of Gibraltar, Servetus published a book—*De Erroribus Trinitatis*—‘concerning the mistakes of the Trinity’—a singular instance of juvenile conceit. Can he have meant ‘concerning erroneous doctrines about the Trinity’? Even so, he began rather early. He next discovered the circulation of the blood. What could the blood do but circulate? He was not *born* at ‘Villeneuve in Aragon,’ but at Tudela in Navarre! In 1546 he had a row with Calvin, who ‘meanly accused his adversary, through an intermediary, to the Inquisition.’ ‘That is the kind of hairpin Calvin was.’ The monument says nothing about that.

\* \* \*

Mr. W. D. Howells has been discussing the question, ‘Do we think in words, or is there a mental process precedent to them?’ He goes rather deep into psychology, and perhaps few of the readers of *Harper's Magazine* can dive with him. Certainly I cannot do so without imminent peril of being suffocated. But I understand Mr. Howells to hold that thought is prior to words. Tennyson was of the same opinion—

‘Thought leaped out to meet with thought  
E'er thought could wed itself to speech.’

This was the view of Pragâpati, the Master of Life, in the *Satpatha Brahmana*. Mind and speech had a dispute, and took Pragâpati as umpire. He said, ‘Mind is indeed better than thou, for thou art but an imitator of its deeds, and a follower in its wake; and inferior is he who imitates his better's deeds, and follows in his wake.’ Mind, like Moses, has the ideas; speech, like Aaron, expresses them. Surely a man congenitally deaf and dumb thinks?

\* \* \*

If we take the case of cats, they say little, but they think a great deal; they conduct trains of reasoning. M. Gabriel Monod edits *Les Chats*, by the late Madame Michelet.<sup>1</sup> Though I have not yet seen the book, I have read Arvède Barine's review, in the *Journal des Débats*. The book contains an anecdote told by Mrs. Frederic Harrison. An old lady cat felt that she was dying, before her kittens were weaned. She could hardly walk, but she disappeared one morning, carrying a kitten, and came back without it. Next day, quite exhausted, she did this with her other two kittens, and then died. She had carried each kitten to a separate cat, each of which was nourishing a family, and accepted the new fosterling. Can anything be wiser or more touching? This poor old cat had memory, reflection, reason. Though wordless, she was as much a thinking creature as any man who makes his last will and testament. Other cats came, with kind inquiries, to visit a puss whose leg had been hurt in a rabbit trap. One of them, having paid her visit, went out, caught a rabbit, and brought it back to the sufferer. What sportsman could do more?

\* \* \*

The reviewer, I think, misjudges a cat of her own, whose playmate was hanged, by some miscreant, to the bough of a tree in the garden. The other cat went out and played with the dead pussy's pendent tail. It is a common game. My black cat, Mr. Toby, sits on a chair and fishes with his tail for his grey Persian friend, the Master of Gray. Madame Arvède Barine's cat clearly did not know that her friend was dead. Madame Barine, not understanding this, was angry, but finally supposed, as I do, that Minouche did not understand. The living cat was held up to look at the *pendu*, and went wild with terror. 'She understood what death was very well, and dreaded it for herself, but was indifferent to the death of her friend.' This is a cruel misapprehension! If Minouche knew at first that her friend was dead, she would have been frightened from the first.

\* \* \*

Cats dread death terribly. I had a nefarious old cat, Gyp, who used to open the cupboard door and eat any biscuits accessible, Gyp had a stroke of paralysis, and believed that he was going to die. He was in a fright! Mr. Horace Hutchinson observed him, and said that this cat justly entertained the most painful Calvinistic apprehensions of his future reward. Gyp was nursed back

<sup>1</sup> Flammarion, Paris.



into health, as was proved when we found him on the roof of an outhouse with a cold boiled chicken in his possession. Nothing could be more human. Cats, like many wild beasts, wish to die alone. A lady of my acquaintance met in a lane in Kensington an old, dying cat, resolutely tottering northwards. She knew that he knew he was dying, and she knew where he wanted to go. Beside the lane is a place not built over, within palisades, and all overgrown with dock and burdock. So she picked the cat up, despite the remonstrances of a working man, for a sick, strange cat is 'not to lippen to.' She carried him to a hole in the palisade, and he crept in for the purpose he knew—solitude and death.

\* \*

Some cats are snobs, though not so many cats as dogs share this human infirmity. A lady had two cats; one was a drawing-room cat, the other a common kitchen cat. Both, simultaneously, had families. The drawing-room cat carried her kittens downstairs, to be nursed by the common kitchen cat, but every day she visited the nursery several times. She was not quite heartless, but she had never read Jean-Jacques Rousseau, on the nursing of children, and she was very aristocratic.

\* \*

The following verses, *non mea poma*, are by Miss May Kendal :

#### THE WINDFLOWER.

My life was barren of delight,  
And numb were thought and will,  
What time I found a windflower white  
Upon a lonely hill.  
All day I wore it in my breast;  
It seemed no mortal thing,  
Its faint, faint perfume gave me rest,  
Rare, pale, unwithering.

So my sad heart I comforted.  
Howbeit I found at morn  
A wilderness of roses red—  
Red roses with no thorn.  
And as I plucked them—truth to tell,  
I know not how or when—  
But from my breast the windflower fell,  
I never found again.

Now roses, roses everywhere !  
 So heavy with their breath  
 The thornless garden, that the air  
 Is like a perfumed death.  
 'Tis only in my dreams at night  
 I see it, fadeless still—  
 The windflower frail, the windflower white,  
 Upon the lonely hill.

\* \* \*

Talking of proof-readers, and the propriety of burning one, *pour encourager les autres* (not those who correct this periodical) I was once guilty of a book which, for certain reasons that rarely occur, bristled with printers' errors. The proof-reader spotted only one—the name Frazer once spelled 'Fraser.' He under-scored every Frazer in the book—it had a good deal to say about Lord Lovat and his clan—and noted no other blunder, to the best of my memory. Somebody kindly sends me a list of misprints in another book. They are not all errors. It is right to say that an aggressive family 'birses yont,' pushes beyond its bounds, not 'hirsles yont'—a phrase which I never saw. A *hirsle* is a flock of lambs, or a fold of lambs, I think. *Hirsle* may be a form of *hustle*, *que sçais-je ?* Again, Sobieska, not Sobieski, is right, if a woman of the House is being mentioned. But 'circumcircuitous' ! A proof-reader should have stopped that ! Is 'usage' becoming a popular way of spelling 'usage' ? I find that printers and typewriters prefer it. Does anyone know why, in foreign words, they always put *u* for *n*, and *n* for *u* ? They never make an error—I mean they always make the error. The family of Vaus seem to have become Vans entirely through a misreading of *n* for *u*—at least so I have been informed—and I expect to reach posterity as 'Laug.'

ANDREW LANG.

#### NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

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